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Damajanti, forced to fly, reaches a hospitable city, where, though half naked and worn with toil and sorrow, she is adored for her beauty. Finally, she is discovered by a wandering Brahmin and returned to her home.

SAKUNTALA BABAVUII (HINDOO DRAMA).

A HINDOO PRINCESS

After an original painting by S. J. Ferris.

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Oriental Drama

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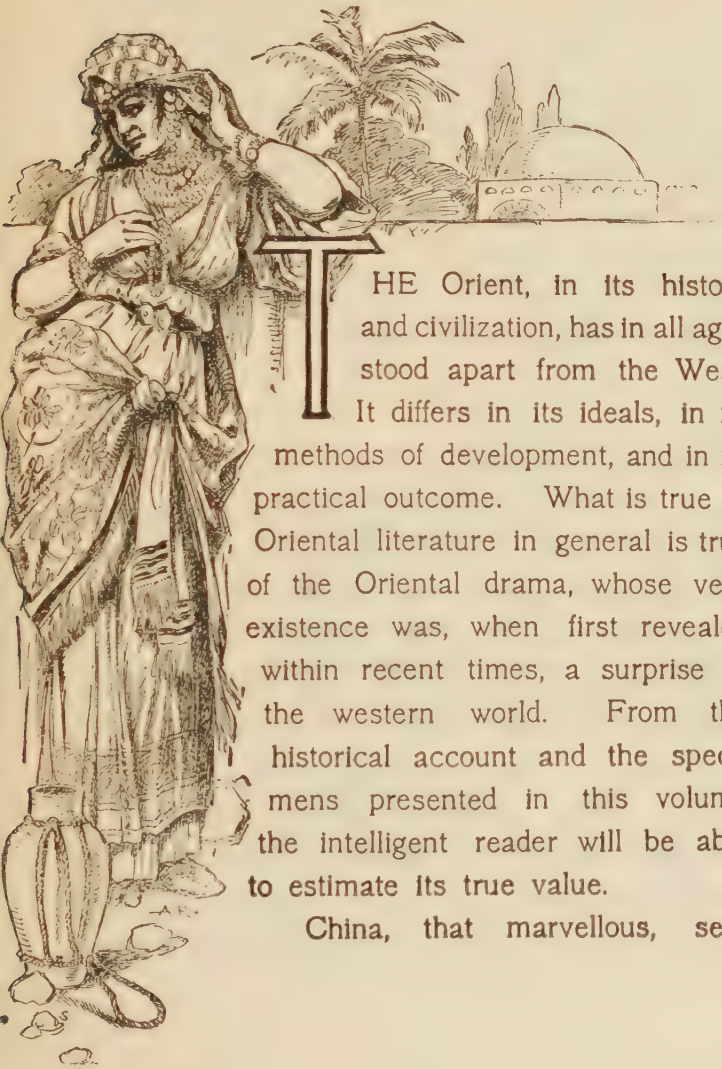
Prologue



THE Orient, in its history and civilization, has in all ages stood apart from the West. It differs in its ideals, in its methods of development, and in its practical outcome. What is true of Oriental literature in general is true of the Oriental drama, whose very existence was, when first revealed within recent times, a surprise to the western world. From the historical account and the specimens presented in this volume the intelligent reader will be able to estimate its true value.

China, that marvellous, self-

contained, stagnant empire, claims hoary antiquity for all forms of its literature. The original pantomimes seem to have been celebrations of harvest, victory and peace. The flourishing age of dramatic production was from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries. "The Orphan of China," which the genius of Voltaire has rendered famous, and "The Magic Lute," which is extolled as a model of morality, belong to this age. Inculcation of virtue is enforced on the Chinese dramatist by the penal code of the Empire, yet the practice does not always conform to the precept.

Hindoo writers ascribe the invention of the drama to an inspired sage, and tell of dances and plays performed before the gods. Europeans first became aware of the excellence, and indeed of the existence, of the Sanskrit drama when Sir William Jones, in 1795, published his translation of the beautiful play of "Sakuntala, or the Lost Ring." This love idyll belongs to the first century, when Buddhism was still flourishing in its native land. Other plays of equal merit and of various dates down to the tenth century have since been discovered. Thereafter followed a

period of decline in which Brahminism triumphed over its rival religion, and plays were written chiefly on the adventures of the heroes in the great epics or of the god Krishna.

The drama was brought into Japan from China: but there has long been a wide gulf between the literary drama and the popular. The former rather resembles the opera or oratorio, and is patronized only by the aristocratic classes. The favorite popular play is historical, the most famous being "The Loyal League." The actors, except in the ballet, are always men, and it is their ambition to excel in finale parts as well as others more natural.

Ancient Persia, intensely serious, solemn and dignified, had no drama. The Shiah sect, after ages of persecution, attained power in the twelfth century. Gradually the pilgrims to the tombs of the martyrs Ali, Hasan and Hussein developed memorial celebrations. For about a hundred years a religious drama has been yearly performed in Persia, which bears singular resemblance to the Passion-play of mediæval Europe. The popular comedy in the cities of Persia to-day seems to be an outgrowth from

the recitations of the story-teller which have given us the "Arabian Nights' Entertainment."

The elevated table-land of Tibet, enshrouded in mysterious gloom, has, by the hardy enterprise of a recent traveler, afforded a glimpse of a singular dramatic development, which is there part and parcel of the Buddhist religion. The play has not yet been obtained.

The literature of the Semitic races—Hebrews and Arabians—shows no trace of the real drama, ancient or modern. Yet some critics class "The Book of Job" as one of the world's sublimest dramas, and others regard "The Song of Solomon" as a dramatic idyll.

Of all these varieties of Oriental drama this volume presents such specimens as seem of most genuine interest, historical or entertaining, for cultured readers.

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The Chinese Drama.

I.

The Chinese Drama.

By the drama of the Chinese, far more than by their national annals, is illustrated the inner life of a nation containing more than 400,000,000 people, one that was far advanced in civilization long before Europe had begun to emerge from barbarism. In bulk, at least, the dramatic literature of China exceeds that of all other countries, the plays composed during a single dynasty filling about five hundred volumes. Thus it will be impossible here to present more than a general idea of the subject; nor could a comprehensive description be written or understood, except by those who are thoroughly familiar with the land where the scenes are laid.

Origin and Development.

As among other ancient nations, the Chinese drama was developed from the arts of dance and song. In some rude form it probably existed long before the Christian era, and, as tradition relates, is older even than that of the Greeks. Certain it is that the ballets and pantomimes, in which it had its origin, belong to a very

primitive antiquity, some of them having a symbolical reference, as to the harvest, to war and peace, and others to such important events as the conquest of China by Wou-Wang; but for the most part they are of humble theme, and often obscure in character.

According to some authorities, the modern drama, as the Chinese consider it, dates from the reign of the emperor Wan-Te, near the close of the sixth century after Christ; others assign it to the days of Heun-Tsung, in the closing decades of the eighth. Beginning with the latter date, the Chinese drama is divided into four distinct periods, each of them clearly marked by its own characteristics.

Periods.

First are the plays belonging to the Tang dynasty, from 720 to 907, dealing with the extraordinary events of an era of peace and prosperity, until interrupted by civil war. Next are those of the Sung dynasty, ending about 1120, treating of various subjects and introducing what became a standing peculiarity of the stage—a leading character who sings his part. Each division of the historic drama has a designation of its own. That of the Tang dynasty is called "The Music of the Pear Garden," and that of the Sung dynasty "The Amusements of the Flowering Forest," the latter holding the throne until they were succeeded by the present line of Mongol sovereigns. The five centuries included in the two former eras constitute what is known as the golden age, its dramatic productions being classed under the collective name of "The Joys of Assured Peace."

But the most flourishing period was under the Kin and Yuen dynasties, between 1125 and 1367, from which our literary knowledge of the Chinese drama is chiefly derived, with a list of 85 authors producing nearly 600 plays, to say nothing of those which were composed by anonymous writers. A Jesuit missionary first made known to Europeans, in 1735, a tragedy whose title, rendered into English, signifies *The Little Orphan of the House of Tchao*, founded on an earlier piece which treats of the fortunes of an heir to the imperial throne. The latter was selected by Voltaire as the theme of a rhetorical play, in which he professes "to describe the manners of the Chinese and Tartars," but the subject is treated with little refinement or discrimination. Much better is the translation of Stanislas Julien, to whom, as to Bazin the elder and Sir J. F. Davis, we owe some excellent renditions of the Chinese drama. Of these the *Pi-Pa-Ki*, or *Story of the Magic Flute*, a domestic and sentimental play, has been usually regarded as the masterpiece of the Chinese theatre. In the more recent drama there is little to commend. "What do we find there?" says a critic, "farcical dialogue, a mass of scenes in which one fancies he hears the hubbub of the streets or the ignoble language of the highways, the extravagance of demons and spirits, intermingled with love intrigues repugnant to delicacy of manners."

In theory every Chinese drama should have a moral as well as a meaning, and this is provided for in the penal code of the empire; while he who writes immoral plays must expect, after death, a purgatory that shall

endure as long as they are acted. In practice, however, it is far otherwise; for, according to the critic already quoted, there is not one among the thousands of playwrights who is striving to benefit mankind by virtuous precepts and examples.

Classification.

While classifying their plays according to subjects, the Chinese make no distinction between tragedy and comedy. Religion occupies the foremost place; but the religious element often degenerates into mere buffoonery, creed conflicting with creed, and superstitions, whatever their origin, being received with welcome. The traditions and doctrines of Buddha are especially prominent, with exhortations to self-sacrifice and entire absorption in religious life. In historical drama, though a law forbids the introduction on the stage of emperors, empresses and the famous princes, ministers and generals of former ages, no such exceptions are made. Thus, in *The Sorrows of Han,* which deals with a national legend resembling the Biblical story of Esther, an emperor belonging to a fallen dynasty plays a sorry part. A large majority of plays, however, treat of domestic or criminal subjects. Their favorite virtue is filial piety, and their interest often lies in the vindication of persecuted innocence and the detection of long-hidden guilt. In such pieces he who is fond of the elaboration of agony, intensified and protracted to the utmost limit of human endurance, will find all that he desires. On the other hand, there is an occasional love-comedy, pure

and simple, but altogether too mild for our modern tastes; for in love-making, as in all their social intercourse, the Chinese have none of our elaboration, contrasting sharply in this respect with their political conditions.

Personages.

In characters, as in themes, the Chinese drama knows few restrictions. Instead of depending on caste, as in Hindostan, rank is based on office, and this again on the results of examinations; so that the senior classman on the list of licentiates is the hero of society and of many a drama; nor is there any prouder boast than that one's ancestors have held high posts, which they owed to their literary successes. Yet the Chinese drama is no mere respecter of class, describing with remarkable freedom the virtues and vices of all grades and phases of society. The same license is used in dealing with either sex, female characters ranging from the heroine who sacrifices herself to save an empire, as in *The Sorrows of Han*, to the model of propriety who believes that "to unravel skeins of silk, to work with her needle and to be obedient" is the sole duty of woman. There is the well-behaved servant-maid, who arranges a rendezvous for a pair of sentimental lovers, and the reckless courtesan, who, after denouncing the partner of her guilt, bids him die with her, in the hope of being reunited after death. A broad distinction is made between the first and secondary wives, the latter of whom may be either courtesans or respectable women—according to Chinese ideas, which, perhaps, are not always clear respecting the

matter, and regarded by the legitimate spouse either with hatred and jealousy or with sisterly consideration.

Length of Plays.

In the construction of the plot there is no little ingenuity, but with slight regard for the unities of time and place. The latter would, indeed, be impossible in plays that often cover long series of years and almost unlimited distances. There are usually four acts, sometimes with a prologue; but favorite pieces are extended to greater length, as is shown in the prologue to the *Pi-Pa-Ki*, where the manager states in the prologue that the play will be finished in a single day. For the performance of more recent dramas several days, or even weeks, are not infrequently required, especially those dealing with historic subjects. Of a certain monarch belonging to prehistoric times it is related that he reigned for several million years, and after his abdication lingered for a few hundred thousand years more, after which he was gathered to his fathers at a ripe old age. It would be no easy task to condense such a story into a four-act drama lasting for as many hours.

Subjects.

The absence of all restriction permits the introduction of every variety of incident. Death by starvation, poison, drowning, execution, takes place in sight of the audience, as also do flogging and torture; miracles and other wonders are wrought, and magic brought into

play, while a father is visited by his daughter's ghost, which calls upon him to avenge her murder, and appears in person at the trial. Marriages are arranged by matrimonial agents, as is the custom in polite society, and at the end, when the knot is to be untied, this is accomplished, as a rule, by the interposition of official authority, thus affording a pretext for a glorification of the emperor like that of Louis XIV at the close of *Tartuffe*. Neither bill nor book of the play is required, the characters frequently announcing their names and genealogies, and recapitulating the previous course of the plot.

Characteristics.

One of the peculiarities of Chinese drama is that the principal character of a play represents, also, its author, chanting the poetical passages, or those which contain maxims of wisdom and morality, with whatever is drawn from history or legend. These recitations, while serving to diversify the dialogue from which they arise, give to it its chief attraction, containing, as they do, metaphors in infinite variety and nicety of meaning. Thus there may be an infinite variety of phrases derived from the names of birds, beasts, colors, precious metals, etc., expressing ideas of rarity, beauty, distinction; and in these features is contained the literary element of their dramatic composition. For a reader unacquainted with the language it is, of course, impossible to appreciate the merits of such a phraseology. For the Chinese drama, in its present form—without denying its merits—cannot be claimed, in any high sense, the art of

poetry; of poetic ornament there is no lack, but there is not the spirit of lyric or epic verse.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that, in addition to ingenuity and variety of plot and character, there is much of pathos, with singular grace and delicacy of treatment, both in the conception and action of Chinese masterpieces. Such we have, for instance, in the *Pi-Pa-Ki*, where the husband of the deserted heroine, when in the presence of his second wife, attempts in vain to sing to his new lute, now that he has cast aside the old one. So at the close of the tragedy, where, after the death of his beloved, of which he is still unconscious, an emperor is represented as sitting in solitude, broken only by the ominous shriek of wild fowl. Nor are humorous characters wanting, as the lively Abigail, who persuades her mistress into confessing her love by arguing, like Beatrice, that "humanity bids us love men." A favorite theme is found in the humors of a competitive examination, and still more to the people's tastes is the character of the corrupt judge, falling on his knees before the parties to the suit. While such illustrations may not be over-plentiful, they are at least worth mentioning, if only as an answer to the supercilious criticism on a dramatic literature as to which we have few materials for forming a competent judgment.

The Stage and Actors.

There are few playhouses in China, permanent theatres existing only in two or three cities in the northern provinces. Elsewhere the stage is usually in a miserable

shanty or on a platform erected in the streets. Hence scenic decorations on any large scale are out of the question; but the costumes are remarkably rich, most of them such as were worn in the seventeenth century or before. The actor's profession is not in repute, most of the players being slaves purchased by managers and trained from childhood for the stage. Female parts are taken by lads and sometimes by eunuchs, not on moral grounds, but because an actress once became the concubine of an emperor. Notwithstanding its drawbacks, the Chinese theatre is always well attended, no matter how poor the play or how wretched the accommodations.

Outline of a Chinese Drama.

Occasionally there are dramas whose scene is entirely in Elysium, the actors being all of the angelic order. In one of them the sun is represented by a man holding a golden disk; the moon by a player in the costume of a woman, bearing a silver crescent; the thunder by another carrying an axe to betoken a thunderbolt, dashing around and committing many deeds of violence. The Shin-sien, or row of angels, circle round or cross the heavenly orbs and elements, mimicking the conjunctions and oppositions supposed to be maintained among the armies of heaven. A mountain nymph, grateful for some kindness she has received, introduces a good emperor into these regions of bliss, but he is not long there before, feeling some solicitude as to what is passing among his subjects in the lower world and fancying that there are grievances to be redressed among his

people, he condescends to revisit the earth and examine into the disorder of his State.

A wicked courtier, disguised as a tiger, appears on the stage and rushes into the secret apartment of the ladies, who scream with terror, while the tiger seizes the heir-apparent and drops him into a neighboring ditch. The ladies then hurry to the court of the emperor, fling themselves down in his presence and recount the terrible disaster which has befallen the young prince, and he is discovered to be the son of the mountain nymph who had been the guide of his father to the realms above.

The emperor is overcome with grief and determines to abdicate and renounce the world. He calls to his counsels a crafty woman, to discuss with her the nomination of a successor, and she recommends to his choice a half-witted youth, whom she expects to use as a puppet. The settlement of the crown is no sooner arranged than the emperor is carried aloft in the dragon chariot to the regions of the blessed. The poor fool is brought forward, dreadfully perplexed with the honors that surround him, and instead of rejoicing in his good fortune he cries out most piteously, "Oh, what shall I do!" The pathetic and the ludicrous are finely contrasted, until there comes to his help the wicked courtier, who has thrown off his tiger-skin, and has broken the heart of his sovereign by carrying away the heir to the throne. The traitor is appointed confidential minister, and involves the new emperor in inextricable embarrassments, anarchy at home and unfortunate wars abroad.

It would seem a fit termination to the drama that the heir should be restored and tranquillity reëstablished, in-

stead of which a new series of events is introduced, and quarrels and negotiations with a foreign court are the subject-matter. Peace is to be restored by the surrender of an obnoxious counsellor, whose son-in-law is appointed to bear the accepted proposals to the court that is to be conciliated. He undertakes the mission expecting to obtain more favorable conditions for his relative from the offended prince, and in order to make his journey without exciting too much observation he returns home and disguises himself by a change of apparel. When he arrives at his destination he discovers that he has lost his letter of credentials, and recollects that he has left it in the garments which he had thrown off. He is denounced as an impostor and a spy, and with great difficulty escapes, wends his way homeward, rushes to his chamber, shakes garment after garment, but no letter is to be found. He throws himself into a chair, in the utmost agony; the servants gather around in sympathy, and he turns to a female slave, asking whether she knows anything about the missing letter. She tells him she had seen such a letter in the hands of her mistress, who is nursing her baby in a remote part of the stage. On hearing this he looks upon her with a smile of affection, approaches her, lays one hand on her shoulder, fondles the infant with the other, and she, with a look of love, surrenders the desired document. Thus peace is made and all ends happily; for with the Chinese, as with the Hindoo and other Oriental forms of drama, it is the custom to dismiss the audience in a happy frame of mind. The peoples of the far East do not carry their business cares with them into their

theatres or into their homes, and in this respect also we have something to learn.

Voltaire's Chinese Play.

In the preface to his tragedy, *L'Orphelin de la Chine,* Voltaire makes some pertinent remarks on the connection between theatrical representation as in use among the Chinese for more than thirty centuries, and the general civilization of the people. He considers this tragedy a chef d'œuvre as compared with anything that France or Germany had produced at the time it was written; that is, the fourteenth century. He remarks that the Chinese play has all the fascination of the *Arabian Nights;* that the interest is kept alive however incredible the story may be, and that, in the midst of the entanglement of events, the purpose and the plot are steadily and constantly kept in view.

The piece opens with a fearful picture of the slaughter and desolation which have accompanied the invasion of the Chinese capital by Genghis Khan. He has murdered the whole of the imperial family, except the youthful heir to the throne. A virtuous mandarin and his beautiful wife determine to save the prince, whom the conqueror is trying to discover, in order to extirpate the last of the legitimate race. Finally he is traced to the mandarin's family, and they decide, in their distress, to sacrifice their own son as a substitute for the intended victim. But when he is led forth to be beheaded maternal tenderness overcomes every other feeling, the mother breaks in upon the place of execution, reveals

the imposture and reclaims her son. The officers stay the hand of the headsman in order to report the matter to the great Khan, who, as it seems, had been fascinated by the mother of the child in her earlier days, when young Genghis bore another name and before he had entered upon his career of victory. She is brought into his presence; his old passion bursts out anew; every menace that despotism can urge, including the threatened murder of her husband and son; every promise that sovereign power can suggest are used, in vain, to overcome her chastity. At last the piece closes with a declaration that the conqueror has been conquered—conquered by a woman's virtue.

Translated Pieces.

The *Heir in Old Age* and *The Sorrows of Han,* both admirably translated by Sir John Davis, have long held a high place among the contributions of China to the dramatic literature of Europe. The last of these pieces has an historical interest, dating from a period anterior to the Christian era, and tradition reports the tomb of the heroine to be still preserved in everlasting verdure as the memorial of her virtues. The persons of the drama are Han, a conquering Tartar sovereign, and his envoys; Yuen, a Chinese emperor; Maou, his profligate minister; two officials, and the princess, Chao. Maou encourages all the licentious habits of his master, and recommends him to collect the portraits of all the handsome women of his empire, and to select for the palace the most beautiful among them. The minister patron-

izes ninety-nine, but, failing to extort a large bribe from the father of the loveliest of all, he disfigures the portrait and keeps the fair creature out of the emperor's sight. The monarch, dissatisfied with all the candidates for his favor, is wandering through the remoter apartments of the palace when he hears the sweet music of a lady's lute. He enters her chamber and is entranced by the lovely but still unknown damsel, who tells her tale and the perfidy which has led to the disfigurement of her portrait. The wicked minister is condemned to death, but he escapes to a Tartar camp, and takes with him the portrait of the divine Chao. On his suggestion the Khan insists on her being delivered to him, threatening to invade China unless she is surrendered by the emperor, who knows he is too weak to resist the Tartar, and that his resistance must lead to the overthrow of his dynasty and the desolation of his country.

After consulting with his counsellors, the emperor determines, though with great reluctance, to sacrifice Chao for the common good, and hands her over to Han. She is proclaimed the Tartar queen; she reaches the Amoor, the Black Dragon river, and, in the presence of Han, offers a libation, tells him she will wait for him in another world and flings herself into the stream. Peace is restored. Chao appears in a vision, but the "wild fowl" awakes him to report that it is only a dream. The head of the minister is made an offering to the shade of the princess, and her tomb is kept green in memory of her departure.

II.

Chinese Plays in English Dress.

However arbitrary the Chinese government may be from our American point of view, the playwright is permitted, as we have seen, to write on almost every subject, including many which an American public would never tolerate. It would, indeed, be impossible to enjoy greater freedom than was granted by the imperial authorities in this respect. Popular opinion does not, as with us, prove a stumbling-block to the author; he has to deal with a peculiar form of civilization, with a nation possessed of strong common sense, a fund of humor and a keen sense of satire, which atone, in a measure, for a defective education. Many of the subjects chosen do not, according to our western ideas, appear fitted for the stage, for they seem to be wanting in interest and passion. Yet this charge is only partial, for even Europeans, connected as they are by strong ties and a practically common civilization, hold divergent opinions as to what is strictly dramatic. Roughly speaking, the subjects come under eight heads; first, scenes from the history of the empire; second, filial and parental piety; third, the exaltation of learning; fourth,

native vices and peculiarities; fifth, those common to mankind; sixth, official corruption; seventh, legal anomalies; eighth, the absurdities of the religions professed in various parts of the land.

The historical plays are probably the best, but we should search them all in vain for the genuine reproduction of any memorable event, or for a better picture of the manners and customs of bygone ages than we have in pieces coming under other heads. The playwrights have sought to give historical characters a more private type—to represent them less as landmarks on the march of time than to show these inner shades of human nature which it is not the historian's task to depict.

The Magic Lute.

Filial and paternal love are, as a topic, unsuited, in our opinion, for dramatic elements, but, curious as it may appear, this has furnished an important part of the Chinese national repertory from the earliest times down to the present day. Filial duty, or piety, is more conspicuous throughout than paternal duty, enjoying greater importance by reason of the extensive authority the law affords a father over his offspring, and, as we would consider, his somewhat exaggerated notions of paternal rights and obligations. The following scene from the *Magic Lute,* first played in 1404, offers a vivid picture of the services imposed upon a son:

Tsai-yong.—(Sadly.) What is the world? (Sings.) I have studied everything; the works I have read would fill a thousand

books. But as for winning fame and honors, oh! I have never thought of that. It grieves me to behold my father and mother getting old. My heart breaks with grief, and to whom can I unburden it? But here comes my lord Chang.

Chang.—My worthy neighbors all look upon me as a staunch protector. Whatever happens, they run to me for advice. (Salutes Tsai-yong.)

Tsai-yong.—Ah! sir, my parents are too old; I cannot make up my mind to leave them.

Chang.—I understand, my friend, that your parents' advanced age and the loneliness in which they may find themselves concern you greatly, but you know that your father wishes you to honor your family ancestors. If you do not take advantage of springtide's beautiful days to set out, when will you go?

Tsai-yong.—You do not approve of my conduct, and——

Chang.—Well, well, here are your father and mother; speak to them of it.

Mrs. Tsai.—(Warmly.) My son, you must not take your wife away with you. Since her wedding two months since, Chao has grown terribly thin. If she lives with you during three years I foresee that, at the end of that time, the poor woman will be fit for burial.

Chang.—Ah, Mrs. Tsai, will you cause discord in your family? Will you set a man and his wife at variance?

Tsai.—(To his son.) My boy, the examinations are beginning. This is the season when the Son of Heaven summons all men of talent to the capital. Why will you not compete for higher honors, since you have passed the first examination?

Tsai-yong.—Father, deign to listen to me. I do not refuse to go; it is your old age and the dread of future troubles that keep me here. If I leave the house, tell me who will remain and feed and serve my parents.

Chang.—My good friends, this is what I think: you should exhort the young man to go to the capital.

Mrs. Tsai.—Do you not realize that I have not in my house seven sons or eight sons-in-law to wait upon me? I have but one son and you want him to abandon us!

Tsai.—(To his wife.) What words have you uttered, wife? If our son leaves us, to pass his literary examinations, shall we not one day possess a large number of servants?

Mrs. Tsai.—(Angrily.) Stupid old man! years have clouded your eyes and dulled your ears. You cannot make a step, or even move your legs. If an inundation comes, when you have forced your son to leave us, who will be here to assist you? You will die of hunger if you have no rice, or of cold if you have no clothes. Do you know that?

Tsai.—Hush, you do not understand those matters. When my son is a mandarin we shall have a different household altogether. He ought to be on the road to Pekin already.

Tsai-yong.—My mother is right. I trust that my father will acknowledge that she——

Tsai.—That's it, that's it; she is right and I am wrong. (To Chang.) I know well enough what keeps him here.

Chang.—Say, since you happen to know.

Tsai.—The attractions of Chao have produced a deep impression upon him. He dreams of nothing but love and the sweets of the nuptial couch.

Tsai-yong.—Father, you think I have intentions which——

Chang.—(Smiles.) Ah! ah! young graduate (sings) you sigh after the indissoluble union of Youen and Yang (birds symbolical of conjugal love). Like the male phœnix, you are loath to part from the mate you love. I fear that, in your blindness you prefer the stupid instruction of Ngo to Pong's audacious flight (birds representing timidity and courage).

Tsai.—You think only of pleasure, and you do not hesitate to argue with your father.

Tsai-yong.—Heavens! I oppose my father! My parents, I would not presume to put obstacles in your way. I repeat that your great age, and nothing but that, keeps me here. If an inundation happens, what will people say but that your son was wanting in filial piety and that he abandoned his parents to go in quest of I know not what preferment. Then my father will be accused of rashness; everybody will say that he forced his only son to undertake a perilous journey. Really, the

longer I reflect over this matter, the more difficult it seems to obey your orders.

Tsai.—Following my instructions depends wholly upon yourself; but tell me what you understand by the word Heao (filial duty).

Mrs. Tsai.—What! you are over eighty years of age and you do not know what Heao consists of? Well, it is merely this; leading an old man about like a child.

Tsai.—Woman, what do you mean?

Tsai-yong.—I shall answer your question, father. A son's duty is, in all seasons, to provide the comforts of life for his parents. Each night he must prepare the couch on which they repose; each morning, at cock-crow, he must inquire in affectionate terms after their health; watch over them when they walk; honor those they honor, and love those they love. He must not leave the roof under which they dwell. This is how our ancestors defined filial obedience and practised it.

Tsai.—My son, these are Tseao-Seae (ordinary duties). There are, however, many degrees of filial piety, and you have not spoken of the higher ones.

Mrs. Tsai.—(Exasperated.) Imprudent man! you are yet living, and it is only when you are dead that our son can be called upon to fulfil his latest and greatest obligations. As to his journey, let it be no more heard of.

Tsai.—Listen to me, Tsai-yong. The first kind of filial love consists in serving your parents; the second, your sovereign; the third, in seeking to win honors. You must likewise keep your body unmutilated, and avoid everything calculated to destroy it. This is the first command imposed upon you; but to attain distinctions, to practise virtue, and to hand down to posterity a glorious name that will reflect credit upon your parents are the highest expression of filial duty. He who does not endeavor to obtain dignities is a bad son; he must struggle for them though his parents be old and poor. If you raise yourself by your talents to the rank of Kwan (Mandarin) and you transform our miserable habitation into a mansion you will have accomplished all your duties.

Tsai-yong.—I have, father, but one objection to make. Sup-

pose I leave you, who can tell whether I shall return with or without the palm of victory? If I fail, you will remark that I did not know how to serve my parents and my emperor. What a fearful responsibility!

Chang.—What fantastic ideas you have, young man! Though I am old, I remember hearing it said: "At fifteen, you must study; at thirty, you must act." The man who hides in his breast the pearls and precious stones he possesses and conceals his abilities, never loved his family. You have learning and erudition, my young friend, and you cannot fail to succeed.

Mrs. Tsai.—Enough, enough, Chang; you are not lacking in fine words to induce my son to go.

Tsai.—Come, come my son, follow my advice and prepare at once for your departure.

Tsai-yong.—Man lives a hundred years, my parents, but are so many days in store for you? Your son feels joy with a tinge of sadness. He prays that you may have long lives, and hopes that you will be like the peach-tree, Fantao, which blossomed after 3,000 years.

Tsai.—Feelings like thine, my son, spring from a heart filled with love toward us. But every man pledges himself at his birth to love his parents and to serve his prince; by doing both of these he wins fame.

Tsai-yong.—As you insist upon it, I shall start for the capital.

Chang.—Young graduate, let your parents' well-being cause you no anxiety. Go, and go soon. My house can hold five families, and if your parents are in distress I shall assist them.

Tsai-yong.—Thank you, Lord Chang, for your generous promises; they embolden me to leave my father and mother in your care. When, however, the day of prosperity dawns for me, will they not be stricken with age? Alas! I fear that if I return with embroidered garments my parents will not know me again.

Tsai.—You spoke just now of our isolation, my boy; but on the day that you become a Kwan, the three sorts of meats and the costly fare offered during the great sacrifices shall be

laid before me, from morning till night, on elegant dishes and in vases of fine porcelain. This is better than eating beans and drinking water. If you come back with honors I shall die, but my soul shall be proud, calm and happy.

Mrs. Tsai.—In the twinkling of an eye the pearl in my hand is taken from me. Go, my son, but if your parents die of cold and hunger, while you rise to be a Kwan, your honor will be tarnished.

This dialogue is very Chinese, but contains, also, many of those touches of nature which make the whole world kin. The characters of Tsai and his wife are well brought out, though with what strikes us as a shade of crudeness.

The glorification of learning is another theme upon which much good work has been done. Graduates often take a leading part in a play, and constant allusions are made to them. The love that makes a maiden's heart beat faster is inspired by her lover's intellectual attainments as often as by his physical advantages or his charm of manner, when he has any. The stage sometimes represents a library, discussions often take a literary turn, and the very atmosphere is, so to speak, impregnated with learning and competitive examinations. It can barely be otherwise in a country where both are constantly before the public gaze, and where they form so important a part of the government organization. Still, pedantry is unknown, or nearly so, and the style of language common to every-day life is employed in the drama. If certain extracts appear to gainsay this, we should bear in mind that the Chinese, in their ordinary

discourse, indulge in a wealth of metaphor altogether foreign to our customs.

It is difficult to say much of those productions whose interest hinges on some native failing or peculiarity. Owing to our limited acquaintance with China, no number of quotations could show us how far the playwriter's efforts at delineation have succeeded. With virtues and vices common to the human race the position is reversed. Avarice is always avarice, whatever be the social conditions around it. It is intensely human, and, therefore, unceasingly engrossing. Moreover, it is one of those topics that survives the changes of fashion and the destruction of empires.

The Miser.

The piece, of which a brief sketch is subjoined, is celebrated under the title of *The Slave of the Treasures He Guards,* or, in other words, *The Miser.*

In the prologue we learn that Thou-yong purposes going up to Pekin, where competitive examinations are to be held. His patrimony has been sadly lessened by his father's prodigality, and he is eager to obtain a certain post so as to make up for this loss of treasure. Accordingly, he buries the greater part of his money and sets forth, accompanied by his wife and son.

In the first act Luig, the god enthroned in the temple on the sacred mountain, deigns to tell us his name, qualities and genealogy. The gods, he declares, are not to be bribed by the wicked with gifts and incense. A scoundrel, Kou-jin by name, enters the temple daily,

worries him, and gives utterance to bitter complaints against deities and men; he bewails having to carry water and clay for masons as a means of living, and ends by cursing his lot. He cannot even afford to purchase a little incense, and he offers his god balls of earth instead! Oh, if Luig bestowed upon him riches he would maintain religious men, give alms plentifully, build pagodas, repair roads and bridges, and befriend the widow, the orphan and the infirm! Sleep overtakes him in the midst of making these fine promises. Luig appears to him in a dream and informs him that wealth is granted by none but the god of Happiness. That divinity, being summoned, forthwith puts Kou-jin to shame by reminding him that he was formerly possessed of affluence, but that nobody except himself benefited from it. Had he not been unjust to his parents and cruel to the poor? The rascal attempts to justify his past conduct. Finding his efforts successful, he goes a step further; he begs, and finally importunes, the god to make him a wealthy man. The latter yields and then vanishes. Chinese deities, who, by the way, generally behave like spoiled children or angry men, must be at some disadvantage when dealing with clever rogues, if we are to judge by the result of Kou-jin's impudent efforts.

When the second act begins we are in a sumptuous apartment, where Chin states that his master, Kou-jin, was once a servant employed in menial offices, and who found himself one day mysteriously possessed of considerable means. But the rich man has no son, and he has commissioned Chin to buy one for him. Here the

scene changes to the interior of a wine-shop, the keeper of which declares that he has in his cellars a hundred casks of wine, ninety of which are more like vinegar than anything else. A weary and road-stained traveller makes his appearance, followed by a woman and a boy. It is Thou-yong. He has failed in his examination and his buried treasure was robbed in his absence. Destitution stares him in the face. The wine-merchant, however, receives the wayfarers kindly and proposes selling the graduate's son to Kou-jin. After a consultation between his parents, and despite his entreaties, the child is entrusted to Chin. Kou-jin, meanwhile, is busy communicating many things about himself. He boasts that, since the gods have enriched him, he has built houses like palaces; that he owns vast tracts of fruitful land, numerous junks laden with goods; that his thousand and one speculations are always successful, and that he enjoys a full measure of the consideration which the possession of wealth confers. And he loves his money above everything else; his sole pleasure is to see it increase, and parting unnecessarily with a single farthing is almost as bitter as losing a limb. He is known to be an arch-miser, and he glories in the fact. Thou-yong's son pleases him and is purchased at once; but the unhappy father, who has confessed his penniless condition, is turned out of the house like a dog for hinting that immediate payment would be highly acceptable. He complains of the treatment and gets a sound beating for his pains. This moves Chin to pity; he promises the poor man assistance and dismisses him with the words: "Go away, my friend; his heart is hard and inhuman."

What follows is worthy of notice. The miser draws up with his clerk a document running in this wise: "The party binding himself by this deed is Thou-yong, the graduate, who, being without any means of living, wants to sell his son to a rich proprietor, the respected Kou-jin."

Chin.—Everybody knows that you are a man of fortune, and very wealthy. Why, therefore, write "rich proprietor?"

Kou-jin.—Do you want to teach me anything? Am I not a rich proprietor instead of being a beggar? Yes, yes, rich pro-proprietor—rich proprietor. Put those words behind the deed. After the bargain has been struck, if one of the contracting parties fails to carry out the conditions stipulated here, he shall pay one thousand ounces of silver as a fine.

Chin.—I've written that; but, by-the-by, how much do you give the graduate for his son?

Kou-jin.—Don't trouble your head about that. I am so rich that I can never spend all my money, even if I shower it upon him.

(Thou-yong signs the paper, which the clerk brings back to his master, who asks him if the graduate has left.)

Chin.—How can he go away since you have not paid for his food?

Kou-jin.—You must have lost your senses! Having nothing to feed his son with, this man sells him to me, that he may live in my house and eat my rice. I am willing not to charge anything for food, but how dares this beggarly graduate to ask for more?

Chin.—He has no means of returning to his friends.

Kou-jin.—As he will not consider himself bound by the terms of the deed he signed, send him back his son and let him pay me a thousand ounces of silver as a fine.

(Chin, who is humane throughout, prevails upon his employer to give him an ounce of silver.)

Kou-jin.—You should not think so lightly of a silver ingot

on which is the word Pao (precious thing). Making this outlay appears a small matter to you, but it is like drawing a drop of blood from my veins.

The parents are naturally furious at such a paltry offer. "What!" exclaims the mother, "an ounce of silver! Why, a baked-earth child cannot be bought for that money!" When this remark is reported to Kou-jin he replies, with barefaced coolness, that a baked-earth child occasions no expense beyond that of buying it. "This fellow," he adds, "sells me his son because he is unable to feed him. I am willing to go so far as not to charge for what the urchin will cost me, but I will not consent to have my property wrested from me. You blockhead!" he cries, turning to Chin, "it was you who fostered such absurd pretensions. In what terms did you offer the ounce of silver?"

Chin.—I said to him: "The Youen-wae sends you an ounce."

Kou-jin.—That is the very reason for his refusing it! Now pay attention and obey my instructions. Take an ounce of silver, hold it up high, very high, and say to him with unction: "Hi, you beggarly graduate, His Excellency deigns to grant you this precious ounce of silver." Do you understand?

Chin.—I am holding it up as high as you like, but it can never be more than what it is. My lord, I beg of you to give him his due and dismiss him.

Kou-jin.—Well, then, not to hear anything more about this affair, I shall open my money-box and pay another ounce of silver, but no more, mind.

Thus ends the third act, and we must suppose an interval of some twenty years before the next one be-

gins. Here, again, Kou-jin is placed in a strongly satirical light. His adopted son is twenty-five years of age, and he himself is a widower, on his death-bed.

Kou-jin.—Oh, how ill I am! How wearily each day drags on for a suffering man! It is nigh upon twenty years that I bought this young madcap of a famished graduate, his father, who could not afford to keep him. I spend nothing on myself, no, not even a farthing, while he, heedless fool, is ignorant of the value of money. He considers money only a means of getting food and clothing; beyond that, it is worth, in his opinion, no more than mud. Can he imagine all the anguish it costs me to spend the tenth of an ounce?

Adopted Son.—Father, won't you eat something?

Kou-jin.—You are unaware, my son, of the fact that this sickness was caused by a fit of passion. One day, having taken a fancy to eat some roasted goose, I went to buy one. The dealer had just been roasting a duck from which came a most delicious gravy. Under pretence of bargaining the price of this bird, I took it in my hand and held it until my fingers were full of gravy. I returned home without buying it, and partook of a dish of rice cooked in water. After each spoonful I sucked one of my fingers. When I had eaten the fourth spoonful I fell asleep. Unfortunately, during my slumbers a thieving dog came and licked my fifth finger. On awakening and seeing what had taken place, I grew so furious that I fell ill. My condition grew worse every day; I am already a dead man. But come, I must forget my thrift a little—let me see, ah yes, I should like to eat some mashed beans.

Adopted Son.—I shall fetch you a hundred farthings' worth.

Kou-jin.—Nay, for a farthing; that will suffice.

Adopted Son.—For a farthing! That money will get you but a spoonful, and what dealer will sell me so little?

The young man goes out and spends ten farthings instead of one, for which he is soundly rated by the miser.

Kou-jin.—You took ten farthings just now and gave them to the bean-seller——

Adopted Son.—He owes me five farthings on the coin I gave him, and I shall ask him another day to return them.

Kou-jin.—Before giving him credit for that amount did you ask his name, and who his neighbors are?

Adopted Son.—Why inquire, father, about his neighbors?

Kou-jin.—If he removes without paying the money, where shall I go and claim it?—I feel that my end is near.

Adopted Son.—I must go to our temples and offer incense for your recovery. Give me some money for the purpose.

Kou-jin.—There is no need for that; burn no incense for the prolonging of my days.

Adopted Son.—But long ago I vowed to do that, and I cannot postpone the performing of my vow.

Kou-jin.—Ah! ah! you made a vow! Well, here is a farthing; go and burn your incense.

Adopted Son.—That is not enough.

Kou-jin.—Take two farthings, then.

Adopted Son.—That's not enough either, father.

Kou-jin.—Then I give you three farthings; that is enough— No, it is too much, too much, too much. My last hour is fast approaching, my son, and when I am no more, do not fail to claim the five farthings.

The vigor of this satire is apparent to all. Few of us have not seen characters of whom Kou-jin is a prototype. His part is in no way overdrawn, and his sordidness is well sustained to the end. It is instructive to place him side by side with Molière's *Avare*. The last act of the play is devoted to the fresh misfortune which overtakes the graduate, and concludes with the return of the adopted son to his natural parents.

The Chinese are eminently skeptical; they pin their

faith and respect chiefly upon a number of practices, many of which are not more than nominally religious. Filial love, for instance, is not closely associated in their minds with some high and invisible being. They accomplish their filial duties because custom and training have instilled into them a matter-of-fact veneration for their parents, and because such is a traditional habit among them.

When they perform the funeral rites they bring offerings to their gods, less an act of homage to them than as a mark of respect toward the memory of their relatives. We seldom, perhaps never, read of a parent telling a lad to do his duty because this is pleasing to his divinity, though we constantly read of his teaching obedience to what was ordered by the sages of old. Thus a rite is celebrated because it is prescribed by usage, while the deity to whom it is addressed sinks into the background. He is the part needed to make a whole, but that part is kept out of sight as much as possible.

A Chinaman can feel, therefore, little scruple in ridiculing those of his tenets which lend themselves to derision. In a land, too, where religions are so numerous and grotesque, and where public opinion and the government allow so much toleration, we may reasonably expect to hear of a large quantity of religious comedies. That the laziness and ignorance of a licentious priesthood should incur censure under these circumstances is not to be wondered at. Strange to say, religion and clergy have suffered little in consequence, and, what is more important, have not purified themselves. How a man can retain any particle of respect for a creed

which has been mercilessly lashed before millions of his countrymen is a problem which we shall not attempt to solve. Inquirers into this question may possibly discover that skepticism has much to do with this apparent anomaly. It will be sufficient here to lay before the reader the summary of a religious drama or tragedy, and another of a religious burlesque, or what at least has that appearance.

A Religious Drama.

The History of the Character Jin shows how some dramatic authors under the present dynasty treat Buddhism, a faith which has more adepts than any other in Thibet and China proper—that is to say, among a mass of people comprising about four-fifths of the total population of the empire.

Leou is a miser and a money-lender, whose sordidness is the subject of the opening scenes. A fat, strong priest of Buddha, coming to ask for alms, he assembles his neighbors and bids them jeer at the beggar's corpulency, which they do pretty freely. "I must measure his stomach," observes Leou, sardonically, and he forthwith tries to proceed from words to action. The priest, however, stoutly resists him.

Priest.—Give me something to eat, and I shall teach you my doctrine.

Leou.—Where is your doctrine?

Priest.—Bring me paper, ink and a brush.

Leou.—I have no paper. (Aside.) A sheet of paper costs a farthing; that man makes ruinous demands.

Priest.—If you have no paper, bring me ink and a brush. I

can write my doctrine on the palm of my hand. Leou, give your hand.

Leou.—Here it is.

Priest.—(Writes.) I make known to you the doctrine of Fo.

Leou.—(Looks at his hand.) It is the character Jin (patience).

Priest.—Say that it is a treasure you will always carry about with you. (Disappears.)

The miser, after vainly looking for the beggar, is convinced that a miracle has taken place. He makes useless efforts to efface the character from his hand, but it imprints itself on everything he touches. An individual who comes to claim money not due to him is struck, and finally killed by Leou. When the murdered man is raised from the ground, the character Jin is found on his breast, where the fatal blow had been dealt. At that moment the priest appears and exhorts the murderer to embrace Buddhism, which the latter refuses to do. He, however, retires into seclusion, leaving to his wife the management of his affairs. His conversion is only a matter of time, and unexpected domestic troubles accelerate it.

Mrs. Leou is of equivocal virtue, and her lord is warned of the fact; so one day he snatches up a knife against her, and suddenly perceives upon its blade the character of Jin. In an instant his arm is paralyzed and the steel falls from his grasp. The faithless spouse takes advantage of Leou's trouble to escape. The priest reappears, Leou embraces the Buddhist religion and goes into a monastery.

The second play is concerned with another religion very widely professed, one based on the tenets of Lao-tseu, and which teaches the doctrine of transmigration. With many writers a favorite theme is the transmigrated husband, who returns to ascertain how long his widow has worn her weeds. As a matter of course, he seldom has the satisfaction of seeing himself mourned long. The subject is distinctly comic, without containing much inherent profanity. The following is an outline of the drama, and its title is *The Transmigration of Yo-cheou.*

Yo-cheou is one of those judges who favor the rich, oppress the poor and serve the party that offers the largest bribe. He has amassed great wealth, but he professes to be in poverty, despite his high functions. The emperor has ordered an inquiry into the administration of justice in the province within Yo-cheou's jurisdiction, but the latter has a clerk who keeps the reports of proceedings and everything else in perfect order, so the wily magistrate is covered with honor, and is at liberty to continue his exactions.

Yo-cheou leaves his court and meets an aged hermit, Lue-tao, who exclaims, on seeing him, "Woe to Yo-cheou! His last hour is nigh!" A crowd gathers around the hermit and takes him for a lunatic. He is arrested by the judge, who returns home and falls sick. Yo-cheou's end gradually approaches, and his family assemble around his bedside. He sends for his brother, to whom he gives a few parting injunctions, and communicates his fears that the lady about to become a widow will not remain faithful to his memory. Both

the parties in question allay his anxiety, and he dies more or less happy.

The second act introduces us to one of the eighteen hells mentioned in the Tao. The king of Terrors summons demons and genii to his palace for the purpose of passing sentence upon Yo-cheou. If the art of scenic decoration were better understood, this picture would be terribly effective, for we have here the weird and yet gorgeous splendors of the infernal abode, the supposed power of its lord, and the extraordinary doings of devils and spirits added to the impression which everything connected with religion produces. As it is, the whole thing savors of a farce, because the meagreness of the decorations strips the scene of its majesty and provokes only scoffing and mirth. Yo-cheou is condemned to a miser's penalty—to pick up eternally small pieces of money from the bottom of a caldron full of burning oil. Lue-tao determines to intercede for the guilty judge and demands an audience of the king of Terrors, or, as he is called in some places, the king of Hell. It is granted without hesitation. The conventionalities and polite platitudes that obtain in civilized communities are also observed by the gods, if we are to credit what follows:

King of Hell.—Illustrious master, I should have gone to see you. My unpardonable want of civility confounds me.

Lue-tao—An important matter brings me hither. What crime has Yo-cheou committed that you punish him thus?

King of Hell.—Are you aware that while this abominable man was on earth he traded in justice? And he was a miser; he shall go into the burning caldron.

Lue-tao.—Great King, emulate the virtues of the sovereign

Lord of Heaven, who loves to give life to all creatures. This Yo-cheou, however sordid he may have been, is none the less fitted for the priesthood, and he has declared himself my disciple. I beg of you to join his body and soul together and to let him return to earth.

King of Hell.—Please to wait a second while I look downward.

He looks down on the earth and learns that Yo-cheou's widow has just burned her husband's corpse. His regret at this occurrence is expressed in befitting terms.

Lue-tao—In that case what can be done?

Yo-cheou.—What infamy! What abominable cruelty! Ah, my wife, you were in a great hurry to be rid of my remains. Could you not have waited a day longer?

Lue-tao.—(To the King.) Have you the power, great monarch, to give him the body of another man if you see fit? Yes, I know you have, but will you be pleased to exercise your prerogative in this instance?

King of Hell.—So be it, Lue-tao, I can refuse you nothing.

He looks down once more to find out into whose body Yo-cheou's spirit can be sent. Le, a young butcher, died three days ago, and his corpse can receive the judge's soul. Only, he is dreadfully ugly.

Lue-tao.—I accept your offer with all my heart. (To Yo-cheou.) The transmigration of your soul will take place at once. As you well know, your body and soul cannot be reunited, as your widow has burned the former. But this must excite no vain regrets on your part. You shall go into the body of a butcher with blue eyes; but remember to keep your vows faithfully and do not forget my exhortations.

The third act is the most amusing. Le's family and neighbors have collected near his remains. When the rites are about to begin he amazes everyone present by sitting up in bed and staring at his mournful surroundings. His wife and children almost weep for joy. But Le, or, rather, Yo-cheou, who has already forgotten his adventures, is far from disposed to share in this loving outburst. "Hush!" he roars; "whoever saw such a scandal! What audacity! They come flocking into my very bed-chamber." He, of course, knows none of the persons surrounding him. "Le, do you know me, your wife, who loves you tenderly?" exclaims the widow. She wants to kiss him, but he pushes her back. "Turn all these mad people out," he shouts, "I'll have none of this. Away, all of you." He makes an effort to rise, but, ignoring that Le had a twisted leg, he hurts himself and falls back on the bed with a groan. A crutch is brought, and he straightway leaves the place to go in search of his own house.

In the next act he is scarcely able to recognize his former dwelling, for it was repaired after his death by order of the imperial censor, in memory of his long and loyal services as a magistrate. He knocks at his door, and his wife, who opens it, almost swoons with fright when she learns that he is Yo-cheou. Before she has time to recover he walks into the house, followed by Le's relatives. The butcher's wife claims her husband, while the revived corpse swears that he is Yo-cheou, the former judge, and receives a sound thrashing for seeking to pass under another name.

Finally all parties go before the censor. But this is

a case to puzzle a man even wiser than Solomon, seeing that Le is the plaintiff, Yo-cheou the defendant, and that both are the same individual. Fortunately, the old hermit appears at this juncture and reminds Yo-cheou of the vows he has already broken, whereupon the latter makes a virtue of necessity and takes refuge in a cloister.

It may be remarked that the unities of time, place and action are but little observed, even the three summaries which have passed before us showing to what extent they are sometimes set at naught.

A conspicuous difference between the European and Chinese dramas is explained by the fact that whereas in the former love holds a leading part in the latter it is relegated to a secondary place. In Europe love is a passion, in China a sentiment only; hence the thousand intrigues love gives rise to are, in the latter country, either thrown into the shade or tabooed entirely. Without their ardent passions many of our theatrical productions would lose their interest and most of their merit. An American or European play-goer requires a due quantum of love; in China, on the other hand, this demand finds little echo, since love there is not the chief theme of bard and painter. Convention and the strength of parental authority have crushed, in a great measure, those amorous longings which exist in the human heart; and as love, courtship and matrimony are more prosaic in the far East than in our part of the world, the first of these feelings, if handled as a passion, cannot powerfully arrest the attention of the multitude.

Side by side with this singularity is another not less striking, and that is the singing man. There is but one

in each piece, and he intones, as a portion of his rôle, verses intended to point out a reflection, an allusion to former events, the unusual aspect of a situation, or anything else upon which the author wishes to lay stress. He often interrupts the development of the action, but this not infrequently affords him an opportunity of putting the writer's inmost thoughts more forcibly before the spectator.

In the *Confronted Tunic*, as the title may be translated, a beggar, dying of cold and hunger, is befriended by a man who offers him shelter under his own roof. The outcast tells his woeful story to his benefactor and his son. The father, filled with compassion, exclaims: "Behold this unfortunate man! For him the wheel of fortune has not turned!" And then he adds, singing: "Who would believe that in this world there are many creatures so unhappy that they can hardly be taken for men?"

A Soubrette's Intrigues.

In *A Soubrette's Intrigues*, Pay-meen-chong, a graduate, is in love with the fair Seao-man, whom he met in a garden. The maiden reciprocates his love and sends her attendant, Fan-sou, after him.

Fan-sou.—Sir, I salute you.

Pay-meen-chong.—Ah, so you are here, Fan-sou.

Fan-sou.—How do you find yourself?

Pay-meen-chong.—I am dying of shame! I am ill, and she has reduced me to this state. Do not wonder at it, Fan-sou. But what brings you here?

Fan-sou.—My mistress takes a great interest in you, and

she wishes to know if rest has made you feel better. (Sings.) She recommends to you, sir, warm potions and taking care of your noble person.

Pay-meen-chong.—Does she send me any other advice?

Fan-sou.—(Sings.) She desires you to study the King (a book so called) and the historians, and not to neglect literature.

Pay-meen-chong.—Does she send me also any counsels coming from her heart?

Fan-sou.—(Sings and lays a finger on Pay's mouth.) Take care to let no indiscreet word escape you.

Pay-meen-chong.—I am so ill that my soul is weary and my dreams are no longer peaceful.

We remember how Tsai-yong, in *The Magic Lute*, left home, at his father's request, to go to Pekin. We now find that he has competed with success, and that the emperor loaded him with honors. But his triumph undermined his love for Chao, and when his sovereign offered him a wife from among the great families of the land he accepted her. Remorse, however, and a remnant of love for her whom he has forsaken leave him no peace. Neaou, his second wife, in the first flush of wedded bliss, perceives that anxiety of some kind clouds her husband's happiness, and her efforts to arrive at the truth have a womanly ring.

Neaou.—I heard just now the sound of your lute.

Tsai-yong.—Yes, wife, I play to calm my troubled mind.

Neaou.—I heard of your talents long ago, and everyone says that you are a proficient in music. How is it, then, that as soon as I come to listen you cease? I am glad to hearken to your playing, for your servant, too, has troubles. Sing me a song, I beg of you.

Tsai-yong.—Since you wish it I will do so; but say, what do you want me to sing? Would you like "The Pheasant that takes Flight in the Morning?"

Neaou.—Oh, no, it contains no love.

Tsai-yong.—You are wrong. Still, I shall sing "The Bird Louen Separated from the Mate it Loves?"

Neaou.—Why will you describe with your lute the sorrows of widowhood?

Tsai-yong.—Then let us take something else. What do you say to "The Vengeance of the Beautiful Concubine Chao-keun?"

Neaou.—Why sing of vengeance in the palace of the Hans, where peace and concord reign? In such a calm evening, my lord, and before such a delightful landscape, let me hear "When the Tempest Shakes the Pines."

Tsai-yong.—Very well, it is a fine song. (Sings and accompanies himself on the lute.)

Neaou.—(Interrupts.) You make a mistake. Why do you sing to the tune "When I Dream of Returning to my Birthplace?"

Tsai-yong.—True, I shall begin again.

Neaou.—You are wrong once more, my lord; that is the air of "The Abandoned Turtle-dove."

Tsai-yong.—I take one tune for the other.

Neaou.—You cannot do that unwittingly. You despise me and will not sing before me.

Tsai-yong.—Such a thought is far from me. The fact is that I cannot use this instrument.

Neaou.—And why not?

Tsai-yong.—Because I used always my old one when I sang formerly. This lute is new and I am not accustomed to it.

Neaou.—Where is the other one?

Tsai-yong.—I threw it away long ago.

Neaou.—Why?

Tsai-yong.—Because I have a new one.

Neaou.—Suffer your servant to ask you another question. Why do you not leave this instrument and return to the old one?

Tsai-yong.—Do you think, wife, that at the bottom of my heart I do not love my old lute? But unfortunately I cannot leave this one!

Neaou.—Allow me to put to you one more question, my lord. As you cannot abandon this instrument, how comes it that you are still attached to the other? I fancy that your heart is far away.

Tsai-yong.—(Sadly.) I have broken my old lute, and now that I desire to play on this one, I am unable to do so, for I confound one note with another.

Neaou.—The confusion exists only in your heart. Whom is it that you think of with so much emotion?

Tsai-yong.—Whom can I think of?

Neaou.—How can I tell? Of some one, perhaps, you would not like to see again.

And the scene continues in this style until the graduate's secret is torn from him by his wife's shrewdness and tenacity.

This conjugal story leads to another of a different description, without which no account of the Chinese drama can be held satisfactory. But before doing this there should be explained a peculiar phase of Chinese life generally avoided by writers of travels.

We have all heard how a Chinaman considers a large family one of the signal favors of his gods. There are times, however, when a husband's hopes to rear posterity are shaken in one way or another, and he seeks out of doors for pleasures he cannot find at home. This destroys home life to a degree incompatible with Chinese notions. The law empowers him, therefore, to introduce into his family circle a concubine, whose children by him are considered legitimate, if the lawful wife have no

issue, while in the contrary cases they are bastards whose paternity has been recognized. It is only fair to add that this custom is not general; that the interloper can enter the household with the wife's leave only, under duly defined conditions, and that she owes obedience to the mistress of the house. Taking into account woman's idiosyncrasies, it is easy to guess what heart-burnings such a system can occasion and what opportunities it affords for character-drawing. The following affords a fair example:

A Social Drama.

Le is a rough and simple citizen with a modicum of brains, and he is captivated by Chang-eon, a young and fickle woman of doubtful reputation, but unquestionably beautiful. She is also endowed by nature with remarkable cleverness and fertility of resource. Small wonder, then, that Le gets hopelessly entangled in her meshes. She feels no love for him, though a strong one for his money, and she proposes to perform the ceremonies necessary before gaining admission under his roof, and to which we shall give the name of marriage, since they constitute a sort of polygamy. Le has not the power, perhaps not the will, to refuse her. His wife, Leou, as might be expected, indignantly but vainly protests against his decision, and this is what ensues:

Le.—I will marry her.

Leou.—If you do that, you will kill me with grief. (Sings.) My indignation waxes so fierce that I long to plunge her powdered face into the waters of the river Me-lo. If her passion for you grows stronger, it is because she yearns to deprive

me of the pleasures to which I am entitled. Turn your ear away from the insidious words of her mouth. This vile woman deceives you, she trades on her charms, and still you are eager to marry her! (Sings in another key.) What! you propose admitting this she-wolf into your house. Remember that, when you have married her, harmony will give place to petty quarrels. How can you stoop to leave your lawful wife for a degraded concubine? If you do not take up my defence when she and I fall out, I shall quit this place. If I hasten to meet you when you return home this woman will heap insults upon me from her window.

Le.—You misjudge her; she is as incapable as myself of doing such things.

Leou.—(Sings.) Turn a deaf ear to a creature whose heart is full of malice. She will lose no opportunity of abusing your scenes and torment you with her tongue. To satisfy her you will require heaps of gold and silver. The day will come when you will have to pawn your farm and your lands, and to sacrifice your silken stuffs. You will then resemble a leafless twig.

Le.—Ah, she possesses so many attractions, how can I help being in love with her?

Leou.—(Sings.) You love her glances and you worship her painted and finely arched black eyebrows. But remember that her brow, with its splendor, like that of the flower Fou-yang, brings ruin on homes; that her lips, red like a cherry and soft like a peach, help to devour men's souls. Her breath is as sweet as the odor of the clover tree, but I fear that a gust of wind will scatter all these charms.

Le.—You dread imaginary things. At any rate, I am resolved to marry her.

No other conclusion could be expected. Chang-eou is introduced into the house to pay Leou the homage prescribed by custom.

Chang-eou.—(On the threshold.) Mr. Le! Mr. Le! (He

comes out of his room.) Are your ears stopped up? I have been calling you since the last hour and you do not hear me! I come to pay my respects to your wife. Four distinct bows I shall make her. She will receive the first sitting, at the second I expect her to rise, and she will return the third and fourth. If she conforms herself to the requirements of politeness, so much the better; but if she does not, I shall leave the house at once.

Le.—Come, there is no hurry; I shall go and speak with her. (To Leou.) Wife, Chang-eou is here, and her desire is to do homage to you. Do not fail to return her last two bows. If you do not respect established usages she will quarrel with you.

Leou.—For the sake of peace, I am ready to do as you wish.

Chang-eou.—(To Leou.) Madam, be pleased to sit down before receiving your sister's homage. (Bows twice.)

Le.—My wife will now rise.

Chang-eou.—(Bowing several times.) What devil of a nail fixes her to that chair? How is it that she does not acknowledge my courtesies? (Gets angry.)

Leou loses her temper also, and sharply scolds her husband. The latter does his utmost to calm her and to put an end to this unpleasant scene, but he finds his task a thankless one. Chang-eou feels that she is bound to win the advantage, and she is not the person to waste an opportunity of attaining her object. "I tell you once for all, Le," she exclaims, "that if you love her I must retire, but that if you love me you must repudiate her!" "How can I turn her off?" asks Le, "when she is my wife and the mother of my son and daughter?" "What!" replies Chang-eou, "besides refusing to listen to me you take her part! Enough; I leave the house." But Le cannot consent to lose his paramour. He resolves to cast

off Leou, and when the latter hears of this she swoons. Grief kills her in a short time.

The Lime Story Circle.

One might again fancy that the judgment of Solomon had passed the borders of China, and suggested to the author of the *Hwin-han-ki*, or *Lime-circle Story*, the incident on which this drama turns. The Chinese play exhibits a very lively picture of the social habits of the Chinese—the relations existing between husbands and wives, and handmaids, and the descendants of both; the modes of educating boys and girls; the superstitions, sacrifices and religious services; the injustice and cruelties of the tribunals; the corruptions of the officials from the meanest to the mightiest. After all sorts of complications and intrigues, and the temporary triumph by falsehood and bribery of a wicked wife and her confederates, the story culminates in their exposure and punishment by the sagacious magistrate, who is the last appellate judge.

There are present the governor, Ching, bearing from the emperor the golden ensign and the sword of power; the widow Ma, who had been living in adultery with Chao during her husband's lifetime; and they are now in collusion in order to obtain the property of the deceased, and claim his child as their legitimate offspring.

There are, also, Hai-tang, the real mother of the child; Chang-lin, her brother, and sundry other persons. They all kneel in the presence of the governor.

Ching.—Who is the mother of the child?

Widow Ma.—I—I.

Ching.—All you who are gathered together, tell me who is the mother of the child.

All.—Ma, Ma, is the mother.

Ching.—Call Chang-lin. Get a piece of chalk, and make a circle, in the middle of which you will place the child. Set the two women to pull at the child together, the true mother will easily get possession of it, the false mother will not be able.

(The officer makes the circle and places the child in the centre. Ma drags the child out of the circle. Hai-tang fails to do so.)

Ching.—Surely Hai-tang cannot be the mother of the child, or she would have obtained possession of it. Officer, seize her and apply the bastinado.

(The officer obeys.)

Ching—Let them have another trial. Let us once more see who gets the child.

(Again the child is placed in the circle, and again Widow Ma gets hold of the child.)

Ching—Woman! have we not given you every chance? You did nothing to obtain the child. Officer, deal her out severer blows.

Hai-tang.—Excellence! O, check your anger; it frightens me like the noise of thunder. Lay aside that threatening frown, terrible as the look of a wolf or tiger. Your servant was married to Ma, and bore this child to him. Nine months I carried it in my bosom, three years I have nourished it with my own milk, and I have always treated it with maternal love. When it was cold it was I who warmed its delicate limbs. With pain and weariness I have brought it to its present age of five. I know how weak it was; I knew it would have been injured had I seized the child violently to drag it from her who held it so strongly. I could not obtain my child without tearing its limbs asunder. I had rather perish than subject my child to what it must have suffered had I attempted to drag it out of the circle. Pity me!

She sings:

A tender mother could do no other!
Judge, Excellency! judge for yourself.
The poor child's arms are soft and weak as pith
Hidden by the outer hemp. And how could she,
Cold, cruel as she is, partake my fears?
But you, sir, you—you should perceive the truth.
Our fates how different! she is rich and strong;
I helpless, poor, humiliated, scorned!
Yes! had I been so violent as she,
You would have heard the poor child's breaking bones,
And seen his flesh in fragments!

Ching—We cannot always see our way, and yet we may sometimes reach the secret workings of the heart. Do not the sages say:

How can a man conceal his real self
When you can read his actions? can explore
The motives of his doings, and discern
The goal toward which he runs?

There was a marvelous power in that chalk circle. It is certain that the widow sought to grasp the child, that with him she might grasp the fortune of Ma, her late husband. Might she not have thought that the concealed truth would force itself into open day?

Ching recites this verse:

She seized the child the heritage to seize,
But the white ring revealed her treacheries!
She had a sweet expression, but within
There lay a mine of cruelty and sin.

But the true mother is found. Bring forward the adulterer.

(Chang-lin, kneeling, produces Chao.)

Ching.—A pretty business this. Let us have the truth—the truth in all its details. To gratify a criminal passion, you poisoned Ma. You took possession of this child that you might get hold of his inheritance. You bribed these men and women to bring forward their false testimony.

Chao.—Your servant is but the clerk of the court. How could he be ignorant of the penal law? That he is so, is the fault of the governor of Ching-chow. I am but a mute instrument in his hands. I only hold the pencil, and write down the answers of the accused. If there be errors on the record, it is no fault of the clerk.

Ching.—I do not ask you about errors on the record. I ask you if, to indulge a criminal passion, you poisoned Ma.

Chao.—O, sir! look on that countenance covered with a mask. Remove the paint, you will find a hideous face, which no man would pick up in the street. How could such an one seduce your servant?

Widow Ma.—What! You never ceased to tell me that I was beautiful as the beautiful Kwan-yin—and now to treat me thus insultingly! Perfidious cur! that deserves not the name of man!

Chang-Lin.—Yesterday, while the snow was falling in large flakes Chao and Widow Ma were together. They followed two soldiers to come to an understanding with them. It is clear he was her lover. Excellency, call the soldiers and inquire of them.

Chao.—We ourselves brought them.

Ching.—Take hold of Chao, officer, and flog him lustily with the heavy bamboo.

Hai-Tang sings:

You only thought to deal with Mistress Ma!
You never dreamed I should come back again.
Did I not see ye both upon the road?
And now we meet again. Reply, reply!

(Chao feigns death.)

Ching.—The fellow pretends to be dead. Lift him up, officer, throw water upon his face. Let us waste no time. Confess.

Chao.—I have sinned with this woman; but I am not a murderer. I did buy the poison, but I did not suggest the crime. This woman took it from me; she mixed it in a basin of soup. She caused her husband's death. I did not carry away the child. I told her, as she was not its mother, to leave the matter alone.

She said if she got the child she got Ma's fortune with it. I am but a poor clerk. Where could I have found the money to bribe these witnesses? She bribed them. She bribed the soldiers to get rid of Hai-tang. Yes! she did it. She did it!

Widow Ma.—Scoundrel that you are! What shall I say? Well, I did it all; 'tis no great misfortune to die. We may live in a future world, and be faithful to one another!

Ching.—Listen, all you who are present, and hear my supreme decree! The governor of Ching-chow has transgressed the law. He is deprived of his button and his belt; he is degraded; he must return to the people and never again have public employment. The false witnesses are to receive eighty blows, and to be banished one hundred les from home. Chao and his comrade, being officials, must be more severely punished. One hundred blows, and to be transported beyond the frontiers to an arid uninhabited land. The adulterous woman and her infamous accomplice shall be taken to the public square and suffer a slow and ignominious death. They shall be cut up into one hundred and twenty pieces. All they possess shall be transferred to Hai-tang and her son, who is committed to her tender care. Her brother, Chang-lin, may quit his employment and live with his sister; but he is to be the executioner, to decapitate the guilty pair.

The drama concludes by Hai-tang singing a triumphant hymn to the honor and glory of the just judge, telling him that the history of the chalk circle shall extend to the four seas, the limits of earth, and be repeated throughout the empire.

Exclusion of Women.

To the student of the English drama it is well known that, before the restoration of Charles II, women were not permitted on the English stage, while in Italy they

were unknown as late as 1740. Their introduction on European boards is probably the outgrowth of progress or public sentiment; but in China the reverse is the case. In that country, acting, as a profession for women, was countenanced until the middle of the eighteenth century, when they were excluded, nominally on account of their profligacy, and this regulation is still in force. It is difficult to ascertain how far this measure was justified, but it probably had a political rather than a moral signification. Tolerating actresses, especially in a country where the drama possesses a great influence, is a violation of the traditional principle of government, in virtue of which women are constantly kept in subjection. A talented actress is sure to be a popular idol; wealth and honors are laid at her feet, her fancies are humored, and her irregular life tolerated. She enjoys an apparent superiority over the general run of men, and her sex thereby gains strength and influence. Her ambitious sisters, too, in other walks of life, strive to throw off their shackles. Many will urge that, if this view be correct, the authorities would have found an earlier opportunity of suppressing what they regard as an evil; and, in reply, it may be said that our limited acquaintance with Chinese history renders it impossible to determine in what way social and other causes hindered the carrying out of this so-called reform at an earlier date. If, on the other hand, the measure had a purely moral tendency, who can explain why the government delayed so long to enforce it? It is proper to add that, whatever the reason, it did not affect the nature of the drama, although from a strictly artistic point of view it caused

a grotesqueness in the love parts, together with other incongruities.

It is worthy of note that, while in the titles of pieces an elaborate display of words is used, as "The Slave of the Treasures He Guards," in lieu of the simple but comprehensive word "Miser," the contrary is the case when giving names to characters, and these are often adapted to the bearer's position and proclivities. Witticisms are greatly sought after, and humor and satire are far from neglected. For instance, the presiding official at a competitive examinataion is thus made to address the candidates, his comical vein inducing us to overlook his buffoonery:

A Competitive Examination.

"Gentlemen graduates, by a decision of the sovereign court of Le-pou I am appointed examiner-in-chief, and as a new triennial period is about to open, the emperor has charged me to preside over the examens. It is for me to discern each candidate's merit. But, gentlemen, do not alarm yourselves, for I am one of those magistrates who love pleasure and gaiety, and I have nothing common, in this respect, with my immediate predecessor. During the last examination, for example, the first essay had for its theme a literary question; the second, a moral one, and the third, one on politics. I propose altering all this. Instead of these three dissertations, you will have to write the second line of a distich, to guess an enigma, and to sing a song. Whoever completes the distich will be able to solve the enigma and to sing the song. He will be raised to the rank of a mandarin and

be covered with glory; he will wear in his cap flowers embroidered in gold, and sit at the sumptuous banquet of the doctors in the imperial palace. As for the man that fails, his face will be smudged with ink, and he will be driven out of this hall with sticks."

For many ages the native dramatists have lashed avarice and official corruption—especially the former—yet both are as widespread as ever, and the Chinese remain one of the most avaricious nations on the face of the globe. Again, the depravity of their priesthood and the ridiculous aspects of their religions have been exposed with unsparing vigor; still, priest and faith have lost none of their influence over the masses.

III.

The Japanese Drama.

In Japan the drama, though growing in favor, is little patronized except by the lower classes, with whom, as in China, it is the most popular of all amusements. While in other branches of art progress was extremely rapid during the closing decades of the nineteenth century, in this the nation remains, almost as it has ever been, without a dramatic literature worthy of the name. Apart from its native elements of music and song, dance and pantomime, with an admixture of legendary or historic narrative, the Japanese drama has been chiefly transplanted from China, and from the conventional Chinese types has never made any serious attempt to emancipate itself. In lyric poetry there is more attempt at originality, though not of a high order, the effect, moreover, being marred by translation and by the obscurity of the allusions. The following are rendered into English from a selection of lyrical odes familiar to every Japanese household, even children storing their memory with some of them. They are all of a peaceful character, didactic, descriptive or amatory. Not a few of them are more than a thousand years old, and the most recent date back at least six hundred years:

TAIRA NO KANEMORI.

Tho' aye I strive my lot to hide,
My face to all the secret tells:
My changing visage, sorely tried,
Shows that deep passion in me dwells:
And all men ask,
What griefs my altered features task?

YUN-SHI-NAI SHIN-WO-KENOPII.

Thy beauty is throughout the land
As well-known as the furious play
Of billows on Takaschi's strand
That drench the venturesome with spray,
Who come their sweep too nigh:
So she who hath thee once beheld,
To tears of jealous love compelled,
Her sleeve shall ne'er be dry.

KAMAKURA NO UDAIJIN.

O, that throughout an endless life
I might in peace dwell, far from strife!
For ever watch the fishing yawl,
And view the net's abundant haul:
How fair to me,
How pleasant such a lot would be!

Modern Japanese Literature.

The conditions of the present day are more favorable than those of any previous time to the production of good poetry in Japan. The ordinary language, by the more thorough assimilation of its Chinese element, has gained considerably in fitness for poetical purposes, and its phonetic capabilities are now appreciably greater than ever before. Still more important considerations are the

great stimulus which the national life has received from the introduction of European ideas, and the attention which has been recently directed to the poetry of Europe.

The original poems include verses written before the colossal image of Buddha at Kamakura, an ode to the four seasons, and a war-song. Neither the original poems nor the translations have striking merits in themselves, but they attracted a large measure of public attention and gave rise to a lively controversy between the adherents of the old and new styles. They also produced a school of imitators, among whom the novelist, Yamada, was one of the most eminent.

Dr. Florenz, writing in 1892, says that 1888 may be taken as the culminating point of the favor shown to the new style of poetry. A reaction then set in, which, however, was of short duration. The last few years have produced a considerable quantity of verse more or less in the new form, of which all that can now be said is that, on a hasty examination, it reveals some promising features. Regularity of form is more carefully attended to—a great desideratum in the longer kinds of Japanese poetry.

The day of Tanka and Haikai seems to have passed. These miniature forms of poetry are now the exception and not the rule. The following specimen, which may be taken as characteristic of the vague and dreamy style of most recent Japanese poetry, is translated from a little volume of prose and verse by three authors, entitled *Hana Momiji*, or *Flower and Autumn Leaves*, published in 1898:

THE BAMBOO FLUTE BY THE SHORE.

I.

In the shade of the firs of the craggy cliff,
To-night again a bamboo flute is heard:
Is it some fisher-boy, solacing his heart
From the woes of a world bitter with salt and seaweed?

Moonlight or dark, he little cares,
Night after night he visits these fir-trees' shade.
In the music of his bamboo flute
There may be heard cadences which tell of yearning love.

A day had passed since the courtiers of the lord of the land
Held night-long revel here, wandering forth upon the beach,
While the bark of the autumn moon pursued its crystal course,
When the fisher's flute was for the first time heard.

A day had passed since the ladies of our lord,
Mooring their gay pleasure-boat, held revel here,
Attuning the music of their golden lutes
To the song of the breeze through the fir-trees on the cliffs,
When the fisher's flute was for the first time heard.

II.

On nights when the dew lay heavy on the reeds of the chilly shore,
And the wind of the firs came in gusts down from the crags,
He never failed to come—this fisher boy:
His bamboo flute was heard in clear-sounding notes.

On nights when the rattling of the hail was loud,
And the ripples on the beach were changed to ice,
He never failed to come—this fisher-boy:
His bamboo flute was heard in subdued tones.

On nights when evening fell wild with mountain blasts,
And the sand was whirled up into the air,
He never failed to come—this fisher-boy:
His bamboo flute was heard in confused notes.

On nights of rain, when darkness came down with a sound of moaning waves,
And the rocks were steeped in moisture,
He never failed to come—this fisher-boy:
His bamboo flute was heard, languid and faint.

III.

To-night the autumn moon was changed,
So long his yearning love has endured.
Still his bamboo flute is heard,
Its tune and measure ever more entrancing.

With the storm from the cliff it was troubled,
With the echoes from the fir-trees it became clear,
With the surges from the deep it was frenzied,
With the waves on the rocks it became choked.

Even the clouds over Onoye paused to listen
To its notes, now calling clearly, and now with strangled utterance.
What wonder, then, that some one descends from the bower above,
And comes forth absorbed in reverie!

For awhile the flute ceased its importunities;
But hark! louder than before
The music of the bamboo bursts forth, making the sky resound,
And in accord with it, how sweet!
Are heard the notes of a golden lute.

Some time the wide-spreading clouds, descending from Onoye,
Bore away with them the musicians of the fragrant rocks below,

Up to that region where the bark of the moon,
With altered helm, steered straight to meet them.

Development of the Drama.

About the close of the sixth century, one Hada Kawatsu, a Japanese by birth, but of Chinese parentage, was ordered to arrange theatrical entertainments suitable to the country, and produced, it is said by some, five-and-thirty plays. But the origin of the drama is commonly ascribed to the introduction of a dance called Sambaso, as a charm against volcanic disturbances, such as occurred in 805, this still continuing in use as a prelude to more serious performances. At the opening of the twelfth century a woman, calling herself Iso no Zenji, became famous for her dancing and posturing in male attire, thence being styled "the mother of the Japanese drama." But the real author of the legitimate drama was Sarnwaka Kanzaburo, who, in 1624, opened the first theatre at Yedo, play-houses being later erected in the capital and in provincial towns. The Mikado has his court theatre, and at the residences of nobles actors sometimes give performances of a patriotic nature; but persons of rank are seldom seen at the public theatres.

Pantomime.

Like the ancient Greek tragedies, the drama in Japan was in its beginnings closely associated with religion. Its immediate parent was the *Kagura*, a pantomime dance, as to the remote origin of which a myth was cur-

rent at the beginning of the eighth century, though it is performed even at the present day, to the sound of fife and drum, at Shinto festivals. The sun-goddess, it is related, disgusted at the unseemly pranks of her brother, Susa-no-wo, shut herself up in the rock-cave of heaven and left the world to darkness. Upon this the gods assembled in the dry bed of the river of heaven—the Milky Way—and caused the "Terrible Female of Heaven" to array herself in a fantastical manner, and, standing on an inverted tub, which gave out a hollow sound when she stamped on it, to perform a mimic dance, which had the desired effect.

Dialogue.

When the dance and music of the *Kagura* were supplemented by dialogue, the plays termed No were the result. Their beginning dates from the fourteenth century, and they were at first purely religious performances, intended to propitiate the chief deities of the Shinto religion. Later a manager of one of the No theatres, named Kwan-ami Kiyotsugu, attracted the notice of the ruling Shogun, who took him into his immediate service, and from this time the No were under the special patronage of the Shoguns. In the Yedo period the Shoguns gave great attention to No performances, and even to-day there are remains of their former popularity. Representations are still given at Tokio, Kioto and other places by the descendants or successors of the old managers who founded the art five centuries ago. They are attended by small but select audiences

composed almost entirely of ex-daimios or military nobles and their former retainers.

Plot of the No Dramas.

As dramas the No have little value. There is no action to speak of, and dramatic propriety and effect are hardly thought of. The plot is usually somewhat as follows:

A priest appears on the scene. He announces his name and informs the audience that he is setting out on his travels. Presently he arrives at a temple, a battle-field, or other celebrated spot, when a ghost or deity appears, who relates to him the local legend. An exchange of edifying sentiments follows, and the supernatural personage finally reveals his identity. The whole piece rarely occupies more than six or seven pages of print, and requires less than an hour to perform.

The number of the dramatis personæ varies from two or three to five or six, and to these must be added the chorus and a few musicians. The chorus has various functions, chief of which is to chant a narrative that serves to explain and supplement the action of the piece, or to recite poetical descriptions, thus supplying the place of scenery.

The Japanese No Theatre.

The following description of a No theatre is from Chamberlain's *Classical Poetry of the Japanese:*

"The stage, which has remained unaltered in every respect since the beginning of the fifteenth century, is

a square, wooden room open on all sides but one and supported on pillars, the side of the square being about eighteen feet. It is surmounted by a quaint roof, somewhat resembling those to be seen on Buddhist temples, and is connected with the green-room by a gallery some nine feet wide. Upon this gallery part of the action sometimes takes place. Added on to the back of the stage is a narrow space, where sits the orchestra, composed of one flute-player, two performers on instruments resembling a tambourine and one beater of the drum, while the chorus, whose number is not fixed, squat on the ground to the right of the spectators. The back of the stage, the only side not open to the air, is painted with a pine tree, in accordance with ancient usage, while three small pine trees are planted in the court which divides the gallery from the space occupied by the rest of the audience. The covered place for spectators runs around three sides of the stage. Masks are worn by such of the actors as take the parts of females or of supernatural beings, and the dresses are gorgeous in the extreme. Scenery, however, is allowed no place on the lyric stage."

A Favorite Play.

The *Takasago* is the best known and considered the finest of the No dramas. The dramatis personæ are Tomonari, a guardian of the Shinto shrine of Aso, in Kiushiu; an old man representing the spirit of the Sumiyoshi fir tree; an old woman representing the spirit of the Takasago fir tree; the god of Sumiyoshi, and the chorus.

Chorus.—Now for the first time he ties the lace of his travelling garb; distant many a long day's journey is his goal.

Tomonari.—Now, this is I, Tomonari, guardian of the shrine of Aso, in the province of Higo, in Kiushiu. Never having seen the capital, I have now made up my mind and am going to see it. Moreover, I wish to take this opportunity of viewing the bay of Takasago, in Harima.

Cho.—To-day he has made up his mind, and has donned his travelling raiment for a journey to a distant goal—the capital. With waves that rise along the shore, and a genial wind of spring upon the ship-path, how many days pass without a trace of him we know not, until at length he has reached the longed-for bay of Takasago, on the coast of Harima.

Old Man and Old Woman.—The wind of spring that blows through the fir-tree of Takasago has gone down with the sun; the vesper bell is heard from the temple of Onoye.

O. W.—The waves are hidden from us by the mist-enshrouded rocks.

Both.—There is naught but the sound to mark the rise and fall of the tide.

O. M.—Whom can I take to be my friend? Except the fir-tree of Takasago, my ancient comrade, there is none to converse with me of the bygone days on which are ever gathering white snows (of forgetfulness). I grow older and older, accustomed to hear nothing but the wind in the fir-tree either when I rise or go to sleep in the nest of an aged crane, where the night-long moon sheds its rays, and the spring sends down its hoar-frosts. So I make my own heart my companion, and thus give utterance to my thoughts.

Both.—Let us sweep away the fir-needles that lie beneath the tree, sleeve touching sleeve of our garments, whereon rest fallen leaves shaken down by the shore-wind asking their news of the firs.

Tomo.—While waiting for some of the villagers to appear, an old man and an old woman have come hither. I pray you, old people, permit me to ask you a question.

O. M.—Is it I whom you address? What is it you desire to know?

Tomo.—Which is the tree that is called the fir-tree of Takasago?

O. M.—This very tree whose shade we are cleansing is the fir-tree of Takasago.

Tomo.—The phrase "growing old together" is used of the Takasago and Suminoye fir-trees. But this place and Sumiyoshi (the same as Suminoye) are in provinces distant from one another. How, then, can they be called the fir-trees which "grow old together?"

O. M.—As you have deigned to observe, it is stated in the preface to the *Kokinshiu* that the fir-trees of Takasago and Suminoye make us feel as if they were growing old together. However that may be, here am I, an old man, who belong to Sumiyoshi, in the province of Settsu, while the old woman here is of this place. Be pleased to tell me, if you can, how that may be.

Tomo.—Strange! I see you old couple here together. What mean you, then, by saying that you dwell apart, one in distant Suminoye, the other in Takasago, divided from one another by seashore, hill, and province?

O. W.—What an odd speech! Though many a mile of mountain and river separate them, the ways of a husband and wife whose hearts respond to one another with mutual care, are not far apart.

O. W.—There is Suminoye.

O. M.—And here is Takasago.

Tomo.—The fir-trees blend their hues.

O. M.—And the spring air——

Tomo.—Is genial, while——

(Here the chorus strikes in with a canticle which is chanted as the indispensable accompaniment of every regular Japanese wedding. Figures representing the two old folks under the fir-tree with brooms in their hands are, on such occasions, set out on a sort of tray.

Cho.—On the four seas
Still are the waves;
The world is at peace.

Soft blow the time-winds,
Rustling not the branches.
In such an age,
Blest are the very firs,
In that they meet
To grow old together.
Vain indeed
Are reverent upward looks;
Vain even are words to tell
Our thanks that we were born
In such an age,
Rich with the bounty
Of our sovereign lord.

O. M.—I hear the sound of the bell of Onoye, in Takasago.

Cho.—The dawn is near,
And the hoar-frost falls
On the fir-tree twigs;
But its leaves' dark green
Suffer no change.
Morning and evening
Beneath its shade
The leaves are swept away,
Yet they never fail.
True it is
That these fir-trees
Shed not all their leaves;
Their verdure remains fresh
For ages long,
As the Masaka trailing vine;
Even amongst evergreen trees—
The emblem of unchangeableness—
Exalted is their fame
As a symbol to the end of time—
The fame of the fir-trees that have grown old together.

Tomo.—And ye who have made known the bygone story of these ancient firs whose branches have indeed earned fame—tell me, I pray you, by what names are ye called?

O. M. and O. W.—Why conceal it longer? We are the spirits

of the fir-trees of Takasago and Suminoye that have grown old together, manifested under the form of a married pair.

Cho.—Wonderful! A miracle wrought by the fir-trees of this famous place!

O. M. and O. W.—Plants and trees are without souls——

Cho.—Yet in this august reign——

O. M. and O. W.—Even for plants and trees——

Cho.—Good is it to live
For ever and ever
In this land
Of our great Sovereign,
Under his rule.
To Sumiyoshi, therefore,
He would now take his way
And there wait upon the god.
He embarks in a fisher's boat
That lies by the beach,
Where the waves of evening roll,
And, spreading his sail
To the favoring breeze,
Puts out into the deep.

Tomo.—From Takasago I set sail
In this skiff that lies by the shore,
And put forth with the tide
That goes out with the moon.
I pass under the lee
Of Awaji's shore,
I leave far behind me Naruwo,
And now I have arrived
At Suminoye.

(The god of Sumiyoshi appears, and enters into a poetical dialogue with the chorus.)

Cho.—We give thanks for this manifestation;
Ever anew we will worship
Thy spirit with sacred dance
By Sumiyoshi's pure moonlight.
And now, world without end,
The extended arms of the dancing maidens

In sacerdotal robes
Will expel noxious influences;
Their hands folded to rest in their bosoms
Will embrace all good fortune;
The hymn of a thousand autumns
Will draw down blessings on the people,
And the song of ten thousand years
Prolong our sovereign's life.
And all the while,
The voice of the breeze,
As it blows through the firs
That grow old together,
Will yield us delight.

Some of the *No* have more dramatic action than the Takasago. Another example is the *Tosen,* of which the following is a résumé:

An inhabitant of Hakosaki, in Kiushiu, informs the audience that, under an embargo placed by the Japanese government on Chinese ships thirteen years before, he had detained a vessel from that country and made the owner his cowherd.

The Chinaman's two sons come to ransom their father. His master gives him leave to go, but just when they are about to sail two sons born to him in Japan appear and propose to accompany him. Their request is refused by the master, and the father, distracted between his wish to return home with his Chinese family and his reluctance to leave his Japanese children behind, tries to drown himself. Much appropriate sentiment ensues, which touches the heart of the master so that he allows all five to depart together.

In *Dojoji* a priest appears and informs the audience that he is about to consecrate a new bell for his temple,

the former one having been long ago removed. He then directs his acolyte to make the necessary preparations, enjoining on him specially to take care that no woman shall be present at the ceremony.

A dancing-girl approaches and proposes to dance in honor of the occasion. The acolyte forgets his instructions and allows her to do so. She takes the opportunity of seizing the bell by the suspending ring and bringing it down over her, greatly to the consternation of the priest. He calls together his fellows and relates a legend which explains why women were not allowed to be present:

"A man had an only daughter, who formed a union with a Yamabushi (a sort of lay-priest). When pressed to marry her, he ran away and hid in the bell of the temple. She pursued him, and came to a river which she could not cross. But the fire of her passion was so intense that it changed her into a serpent, in which form she found no difficulty in swimming over. Coming to the temple, the serpent coiled itself around the bell, which was melted by the heat of her passion, the false lover perishing at the same time."

The priest, having told his legend, joins with his colleagues in reciting with might and main all kinds of Buddhist prayers and invocations, by which the bell is raised to its former position and the dancing-girl forced to reveal herself in her serpent shape. Involved in flames, she plunges into the adjoining river and disappears.

The *Kiogen* (mad-words) are to the *No* what farce is to the regular drama. They are performed on the same

stage in the intervals between the more serious pieces, but differ from the *No* in having no chorus and in being composed in the pure colloquial dialect of the time. They are even shorter, and of the slightest construction. The following is an example:

A daimio sends his servant to the city to buy a talisman which will work miracles. The servant meets with a swindler, who sells him an object which he calls the Mallet of Daikoku (every blow of which is supposed to produce a piece of gold), telling him a charm by repeating which, as he holds the mallet, he can have anything he pleases. The servant returns with the prize. The daimio asks him to produce a horse. The servant repeats his charm, and declares that the horse is already saddled and bridled. The daimio pretends to think his servant the horse, jumps on his back and rides him about the stage, in spite of his protestations.

The Popular Drama.

It would not be correct to say that the popular drama owes nothing to the *No*. But it certainly followed a different and independent line of development. Its literary progenitor is the *Taiheiki*, which was chanted or recited in public by men who made this their profession. The *Taiheiki* was followed by more or less dramatic stories, which were recited by a single person seated before a desk, to the accompaniment of taps of a fan to mark the time or to give emphasis. To this was subsequently added the music of the samisen, a three-stringed guitar introduced from Loochoo. A favorite story for

this purpose was the *Joruri*, which relates the loves of the famous Yoshitsune with a heroine whose name, Joruri, is now used as a synonym for a whole class of dramatic compositions.

Toward the middle of the seventeenth century we hear of Joruri-Katari—chanters of Joruri—at Yedo, for whom two authors, named Oka Seibei and Tonomiya Yajiro, are said to have written a number of pieces, some of which, known as *Kompira-bon,* are still in existence. They relate the adventures of a hero named Kompira, nine feet two inches high, with a face so red that nothing could be redder, whose doughty deeds in quelling demons and slaying savage beasts are still the delight of the Japanese schoolboy.

O Kuni.

The first Kabuki Shibai, or popular theatre, as distinguished from the No Shibai, and from the Ayatsuri, Shibai or marionette theatre, is said to have been established at Kioto early in the seventeenth century. We are told that a priestess of the great temple of Kidzuki, in Idzumo, named O Kuni, having made the acquaintance of one Nagoya Sanzaburo, ran away with him to Kioto. There they got together a number of dancing-girls and gave performances on the bank of the river Kamo, where the Theatre street stands at the present day. O Kuni, as a priestess, would naturally be acquainted with the pantomimic dances performed in honor of the Shinto gods, and was doubtless herself a trained dancer and mime. Owing to certain abuses, the employment of women as actors was forbidden by the authorities.

Their place was taken by boys, but this also was eventually prohibited. A marionette theatre was next established. In 1661 it was transferred to Osaka, where it was famous in subsequent dramatic history as the Takemoto Za. The marionette theatre is still popular in Japan. The puppets are elaborate contrivances, fitted with machinery for rolling the eyeballs, raising the eyebrows, opening and closing the mouth, moving the fingers so as to grasp and flirt a fan, and so on. The popularity of the Takemoto Za procured it several rivals, the most celebrated of which was the Toyotake Za.

The Dramatist Chikamatsu.

The fame of the Takemoto Za was chiefly owing to the genius of Chikamatsu Monzayemon, who is unquestionably the most prominent figure in the history of the Japanese drama. The birthplace of this remarkable man has been as much disputed as that of Homer. The most probable statement is that he was a Samurai of Hagi, in Choshiu, where he was born in 1653. It is said that in his boyhood he became a priest. He himself tells us that he was a retainer of more than one noble house in Kioto. For some reason his services ceased and he became a Ronin. The Ronin, that is, a Samurai who has been dismissed for misconduct, or whose indocile temper has found the severe discipline of the fraternity irksome beyond endurance, is a very familiar personage during the Yedo period of Japanese history, not only in fiction, but in real life. Countless deeds of desperate courage and many atrocious crimes are related

of them, among which may be mentioned the well-known revenge of the forty-seven Ronins and their subsequent suicide, and the murderous attacks on the British legation in 1861 and 1862.

In the early days of foreign intercourse with Japan Ronin was a word of fear to all quiet, law-abiding people. It is significant that the principal playwright, as well as the most eminent novelist of this period, should both belong to this lawless class.

After leaving the service of the Kioto nobles, Chikamatsu wrote a number of stories and pieces of no great merit for dramatic performance at Kioto. One of those, formerly attributed to Saikaku, is the *Kaijin Yashima*, which bears traces of a study of the older No drama. Chikamatsu's earliest dated work was written in 1685. In 1690 he took up his residence in Osaka, where his connection with the Takemoto marionette theatre began. From this time until his death, in 1724, he produced in rapid succession a number of dramas which, whatever their faults, leave no doubt of his possessing a fertile and inventive genius.

On a superficial examination of one of Chikamatsu's plays, we hardly recognize it as a drama at all, and take it for a romance with more than the usual proportion of dialogue. All the Joruri contain a large narrative element of a poetical character. This part of the play is chanted to music by a chorus seated on a platform overlooking the stage on the spectator's right, where also the persons sit who declaim the speeches of the puppet actors. It is the narrative part which is more especially designated by the term Joruri. The chorus which re-

cites it is the true successor of the Joruri-Katari, or dramatic reciters above mentioned, and is the nucleus of the whole, the dialogue being at first merely subsidiary. It not only supplies a thread of story to connect the scenes represented by the puppets on the stage, but aids the imagination of the audience by describing expressions of countenance, scenery and much more that the resources of a theatre, and especially of a marionette theatre, fail to convey.

On closer examination, however, it becomes apparent that Chikamatsu's works are not really romances, but stage-plays. They have a well-marked movement of plot from the opening scene up to the final catastrophe; they abound in dramatic situations, and many of the scenes are obviously designed with a view to spectacular effect. These things were new in Japan, and to Chikamatsu, therefore, belongs the credit of being the creator of the modern Japanese drama.

Chikamatsu's plays are classified by the Japanese as historical plays, and dramas of life and manners. With few exceptions they are in five acts, and it is not improbable that this number had something to do with the fact that the Dutch were in the habit of visiting the theatres of Kioto and Osaka on their periodical journeys to Yedo to pay their respects to the Shogun. There is also a suspicion that the arrangements of the Japanese popular theatre, with its capacious pit and galleries, and a stage well furnished with scenery, trap-doors, turntables—as in ancient Greece—and other appliances, may owe something to hints given by these visitors. In these respects the Japanese popular theatre is certainly far in

advance of any other in Asia, and more particularly of the No playhouses above described.

Chikamatsu was a voluminous writer. The modern edition of his selected works comprises fifty-one dramas and runs to more than two thousand closely-printed pages. He is credited with the authorship of as many more. Each is of about the same length as one of Shakespeare's plays, so that they constitute a truly formidable bulk of literary matter. The novelist Kioden tells us that a three-act piece of Chikamatsu's was written in a single night, and the statement, whether true or not, bears testimony to the opinion entertained by his countrymen of his facility of composition. His works deal with all manner of subjects. They show that he was well acquainted with the Shinto and Buddhist religions, and that he possessed a wide and varied knowledge of the history and institutions of Japan and China.

The admiration of his own countrymen for Chikamatsu is unbounded, some of them going so far as to compare him with Shakespeare. It is certainly possible to trace resemblances. Both in Shakespeare and Chikamatsu comedy treads on the heels of tragedy; in both, prose is intermixed with poetry, and an exalted style of diction suited to monarchs and nobles alternates with the speech of the common people; both divided their attention between historical and other dramas; both possessed the fullest command of the resources of their respective languages, and both are tainted with a gross element.

But it is almost an idle task to compare Shakespeare with a writer whose portraiture of character is rudimentary, whose incidents are outrageously extravagant

and improbable, whose philosophy of life is wholly wanting in originality or depth, and who constantly introduces scenes brutal and revolting to a degree inconceivable by us. Of this last blemish his audiences must share the responsibility. Nothing seems to have given greater pleasure to these smug, unwarlike shopmen and mechanics with their womankind—for none of the higher classes with any self-respect ever entered a theatre—than sanguinary combats and scenes of torture, suicide and murder. They loved to have their blood curdled and their flesh made to creep, and Chikamatsu took care to supply this demand in no stinted measure. Defects like these are only partially compensated for by a certain barbaric vigor and luxuriance which undoubtedly distinguishes his works. That such a writer should hold the position of the prince of Japanese dramatists only shows by what an imperfect standard this art is judged in Japan.

It will nevertheless be found that Chikamatsu's work, with all its faults, occupies an important place in the history of Japanese literature. The writers of *No* had done something to extend the domain of the poetic art beyond the narrow limits prescribed by tradition; Chikamatsu continued their work, and took possession of, if he failed to reclaim, large tracts of subject-matter which had been neglected by his predecessors. The older poetry may be compared to a trim garden of a few yards square; Chikamatsu's *Joruri* resembles a wide clearing in a forest where the products of a rude agriculture are seen growing among tree-stumps and jungle. Compared with ancient Japanese verse, it is as a rough settlement

carved out of the forest primeval by the sturdy hands of American pioneers, as contrasted with a smooth-shaven lawn.

The Battles of Kokusenya.

Chikamatsu's most famous play is the *Battles of Kokusenya*, 1715. Kokusenya was a famous pirate, the son of a Chinaman by a Japanese mother, one who played a considerable part in the wars of the last days of the Ming dynasty in China. As this is considered the masterpiece of the greatest of Japanese dramatists, an analysis of it may here be given.

The scene opens at the court of Nanking. The last of the Ming emperors is seen surrounded by his ministers. An envoy from the king of Tartary appears, bringing rich presents, which are piled up in the court-yard. He makes a speech in which, on behalf of his master, he asks for Kwasei, the favorite concubine of the emperor, so that he may make her his queen, and thus cement friendship between the two powers.

The emperor and his court are much disturbed by this proposal, as Kwasei was just expected to give birth to an heir to the Ming throne. A traitorous minister named Ri Toten urges its acceptance. General Go Sankei rushes forward and protests indignantly, ordering the Tartar king's presents to be taken away. The Tartar envoy replies with spirit, and is about to withdraw from the imperial presence when Ri Toten strives to pacify him. To enforce his appeal, he digs out his own left eye with a dagger and hands it on an ivory slab to the envoy, who receives it with respect and accepts it in satis-

faction for Go Sankei's insult to his sovereign and himself. The envoy takes his departure.

The next scene is in the apartment of the emperor's younger sister. The emperor appears, accompanied by two hundred youthful inmates of his harem, half of whom bear branches of flowering plum and half of cherry. They draw up on each side of the stage. The emperor tells his sister of Ri Toten's noble self-sacrifice and again urges the latter's suit for the hand of the princess, which had previously been rejected by her, suggesting that her answer should depend on the result of a battle between the plum and cherry squadrons of ladies. The princess agrees to this and puts herself at the head of the plum party, who, acting in collusion with the emperor, allow themselves to be defeated.

Go Sankei now rushes in, clad in full armor, and with his lance drives off both squadrons. He remonstrates with the emperor for setting an example which, if followed by the people, would lead to disastrous civil tumults, charges Ri Toten with treachery, and asserts that his digging out his eye was merely a private signal to the Tartar envoy that the time was ripe for the execution of their treacherous schemes. The emperor scoffs at this learned sophistry and kicks Go Sankei on the forehead with his imperial foot.

From all sides there now comes a sound of conchs, drums and battle shouts. The Tartars have arrived and are surrounding the place. Their general rides into the court-yard. He tells the emperor that the Tartar king's love for Kwasei was all a pretense, and that his real object was the destruction of the unborn heir to the

Ming throne. He avows Ri Toten's treacherous complicity and announces to Go Sankei his intention of carrying off the emperor and Kwasei as prisoners, and of making them serve as menials in his master's kitchen.

Go Sankei's wife, Riuka, now appears with an infant in her arms. She flies with the princess by a postern gate, leaving her child behind. Go Sankei makes a sally, and with one hundred men drives off several millions of the enemy. In his absence Ri Toten's younger brother, Ri Kaiho, murders the emperor, cuts off his head and binds Kwasei. Go Sankei returns, releases Kwasei and reverently sets up the emperor's headless trunk, which he adorns with the hereditary regalia. While he is hesitating whether to save the emperor's body or the pregnant consort, Kwasei, the enemy renew their attack. Having beaten them off, he resolves to save the unborn heir to the throne and to abandon the corpse.

Meanwhile his own infant child begins to cry for his natural nourishment. "What a nuisance!" he exclaims. But on second thought he reflects that the child is his own heir and that it would be on the whole better to save him. So he binds him firmly to the shaft of his spear and retreats to the seashore with Kwasei, pursued by the enemy. Kwasei is killed by a bullet, and Go Sankei, by an improvised Cesarean operation, rescues her living child, a beautiful boy, which he wraps in his dead mother's sleeve. "But stay! if the enemy find the child is gone, they will spare no pains to discover it." So he stabs his own child, who was all this time lashed to the shaft of his spear, and substitutes it for the infant prince.

Riuka, Go Sankei's wife, and the princess now hide among the reeds by the seashore. A Tartar officer, named Godatsu, follows in pursuit. He takes a small boat and searches all the creeks near them. Ruika catches his oar and overturns his boat. He goes to the bottom, and Riuka climbs into the boat with the princess. Godatsu comes up from below all dripping, and a combat ensues, in which his head is cut off by Riuka. Then, as in her bedraggled and blood-stained condition she is no fit company for a princess, she pushes off the boat containing the latter, which is carried away by the wind and tide, and remains behind on the shore. The chorus describes the situation in poetical imagery.

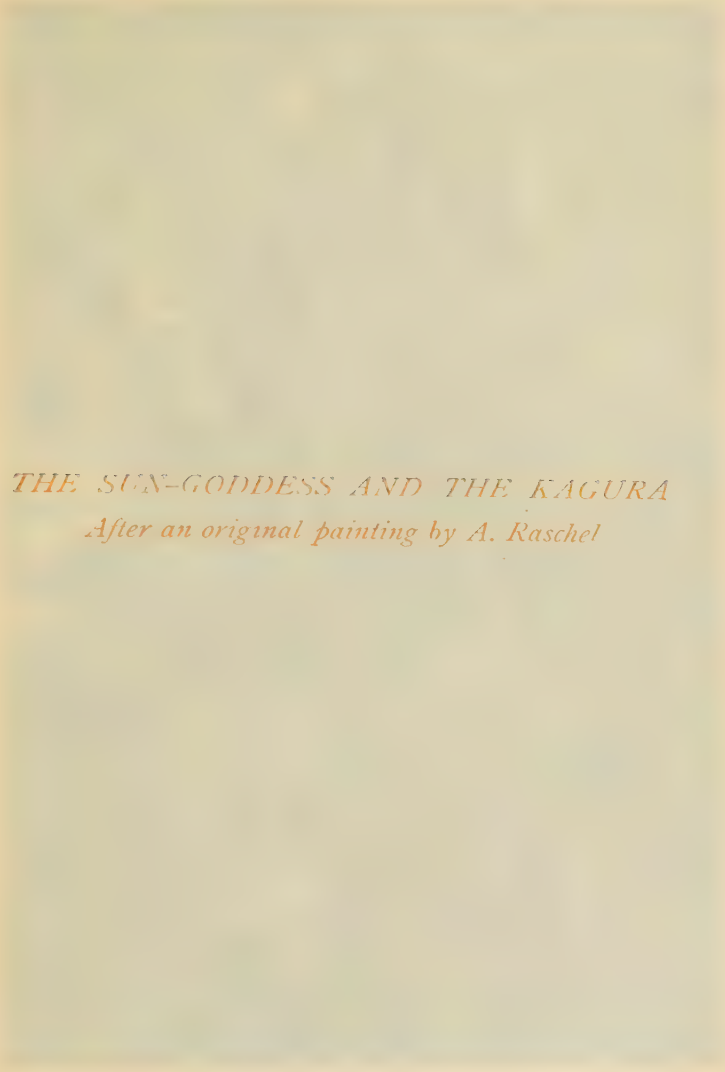
In Act II the scene changes to Japan. Kokusenya, with his wife, is gathering shell-fish on the seashore when a small boat approaches. It proves to contain the princess, who had drifted over from China. Kokusenya's wife, a low, vulgar woman, who provides the comic element of the play, is overcome with laughter at the Chinese which the princess and her husband talk. Jealousy then gets the upper hand, but this gives way to respect when she learns the rank of the stranger.

Kokusenya, who is the son of a trusted minister of the Ming emperors, makes up his mind to restore that dynasty, and proceeds with his father and mother to China, leaving the princess in his wife's charge. On arriving there they resolve to seek the assistance of Kanki, a Chinese magnate who had married a sister of Kokusenya. While travelling through a forest on their way to his castle, Kokusenya bearing his aged mother on his back, they fall in with a tiger. Disdain-

ing to use his sword against the beast, Kokusenya gains the mastery over him after a struggle, which, doubtless, gave much gratification to the "groundlings" of the Osaka theatre. A hunting party arrives; their leader claims the tiger for Ri Toten, the traitorous one-eyed minister of the first act. Kokusenya replies in a style of inimitable braggadocio. With the tiger's assistance he subdues the huntsmen, and forms of them the nucleus of an army with which to conquer the Tartar invaders. Kokusenya's first care is to cut off the pig-tails of his recruits and to give them new names, in which Japanese terminations are appended to names indicative of their foreign origin.

In Act III Kokusenya, with his newly recruited force, arrives before Kanki's castle, but he is absent and they are refused admittance. The old mother, however, is permitted to enter in the guise of a prisoner bound with cords. Kanki returns. The old woman begs him earnestly to espouse her son Kokusenya's cause. He forthwith draws his sword and tries to kill his wife, but is prevented. He then explains that he has not suddenly gone mad, but that if he joined Kokusenya people would say he was influenced by women, so it was necessary to remove his wife as a preliminary to granting her request. His wife being still alive this was impossible.

News of this refusal being conveyed to Kokusenya, he bounds over the moat and parapet of the castle and presents himself before Kanki. After mutual defiance they prepare to fight, when Kanki's wife exposes her breast, showing that in order to remove all obstacles to the plans of her husband and brother she



THE SUN-GODDESS AND THE KAGURA

After an original painting by A. Raschel

The gods assembled in the dry bed of the ri[illegible] heaven—the Milky Way—and caused the "Ter[illegible] Female of Heaven" to array herself in a fanta[illegible] manner, and standing on an invert[illegible] the mimic dance.

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has given herself a death-wound. The two then fraternize, and a quantity of warlike gear is produced. in which Kokusenya is clad, his mother looking on with great admiration. She then commits suicide, enjoining on her son and Kanki to show no weakness in fighting against the Tartars, but to regard them as the enemies of mother and wife. She dies with a smile on her face, gazing at the gallant appearance of Kokusenya in the new armour supplied him by Kanki.

Go Sankei, at the end of the first act, had retired to a secluded place among the hills with the heir to the Ming throne. Act IV opens with a Rip Van Winkle episode, at the end of which Go Sankei finds that the young prince has become a boy of seven, whose voice sounds to him "like the first song of the nightingale heard in some secluded valley where snow still lies." Kokusenya's father now appears upon the scene, accompanied by Kokusenya's wife and the princess, who have come over from Japan. While they are giving mutual explanations the enemy come in chase, but the gods being supplicated, a cloud issues from a cave and forms a bridge, over which they cross an abyss to the mountain on the other side. The enemy attempt to follow, but the bridge is blown away by a puff of wind. The five hundred foes tumble to the bottom and are dashed to pieces.

In the last act Kanki, Kokusenya and Go Sankei hold a fruitless council of war. A letter arrives from Kokusenya's father, stating that finding life at seventy-three not worth living, he is about to seek death in the enemy's ranks. The three, full of determination to

save him, rush off to Nanking, now the Tartar king's stronghold.

The scene changes to Nanking. Kokusenya's father appears before the gate and challenges Ri Toten to single combat. The Tartar king is seen on the battlements. By his order the old man is seized and brought into the city. Kokusenya and his party appear before the walls. Ri Toten tells Kokusenya that he must choose between his father committing suicide or their both going back to Japan. Kokusenya and his party are astounded. Kokusenya's father reminds him of his mother's dying injunctions and adjures him not to think of his fate. Kokusenya is about to spring at the Tartar king, but is deterred by Ri Toten putting his sword to the old man's throat. Go Sankei now throws himself at the feet of the Tartar king, offering to give Kokusenya if the lives of the other two were spared. No sooner has the king granted this request than Go Sankei springs at him, knocks him over and binds him. Kokusenya also rushes forward, releases his father and seizes Ri Toten. The Tartar king receives five hundred blows of a bamboo, and is sent off a prisoner to Japan. Ri Toten's head is wrenched off, and the play ends amid general rejoicing.

The above summary brings into too much prominence the defects of this, the most famous of Japanese dramas. Its manner is better than its matter. There is a copious flow of sonorous and often picturesque language, of exalted sentiment and sententious oratory, which diverts attention from the improbabilities of the story. The personages do and say many absurd things; yet they

speak and bear themselves in a manner not altogether unworthy of tragic heroes. It may be added that Chikamatsu, even in his maddest moods, never neglects dramatic force of situation, and that he has a turn for impressive dialogue. His plays may be extravagant, but they are never dull.

The American reader is not likely to relish the more poetic passages, with their pivot-words and closely woven allusive phrases, yet there is more in them than we are willing to acknowledge. The Japanese find them the choicest part of the work, and they might not unreasonably deny to foreigners the right to sit in judgment upon the finer raptures of their national muse. As a poet Chikamatsu has at least one merit; if Japan ever produces epic, dramatic or long narrative poems of importance, he will have done much to prepare the way.

Dramatic Themes.

The favorite themes of the drama are, for the most part, historical, but with the names of the characters changed. Among them may be mentioned the musical romance in which the popular story of *Chiushingura*, or *The Loyal League* has been amplified and adapted to theatrical representation, forming a narrative of the forty-seven *ronins*, who, at the close of the seventeenth century, revenged the wrongs of their chief upon the arrogant official to whom they were due. It is full of bloodshed and stirring incidents, among them a tea-house scene, which serves as a specimen of the Japanese comedy of manners. One part of this drama consists

of a metrical description, mainly in dialogue, of a journey which has to be performed on the stage. A more detailed description is given on a later page.

Other popular plays deal with similar themes, and there are domestic dramas of an extremely realistic and often highly improper character, though all intrigues against married women are excluded. There are also operas and ballets, with plenty of fairies and demons, to say nothing of farces, burlesques and intermezzos, forming an easy transition to the interludes of tumblers and jugglers. A little of everything is required to make up a Japanese entertainment, which lasts almost from sunrise to sunset, and the theatres borrow freely from each other, the lower sort of play-houses borrowing and mutilating at will from those of a higher class. Add to this the absence of any respectable element among the audience and it will be seen that the Japanese theatre is not in a very flourishing condition. As to scenery and properties it is, however, far in advance of the Chinese. Women were, until recently, excluded from the stage. The best actors are well paid and extremely popular among the lower classes, though excluded from good society, but their former disabilities have been removed.

Popular Drama.

The eighteenth century was the flourished period of the Japanese popular drama. Nearly everything of note in this department of literature belongs to it. Chikamatsu, it is true, began his career somewhat earlier, but all his principal works date after 1700. Since the be-

ginning of the nineteenth century, on the other hand, the writing of *Joruri* has almost ceased.

The Dramatist Idzumo.

Chikamatsu was succeeded by Takeda Idzumo, who wrote about the middle of the eighteenth century. Most, however, of the plays attributed to him were composed in collaboration with other writers, some being the work of as many as five or six authors. It seems to have been the usual practice at this time for playwrights to work together in this way. A committee having been formed, the proceedings began by the president giving out a subject. At a subsequent meeting each member offered his suggestions as to its treatment, and the work of composition went on in concert, nothing being accepted until it met with the general approval.

One of the best known works of Idzumo is an historical play of five acts, founded on the fortunes of Sugawara Michizane, a celebrated statesman of the ninth century, who was deified after his death as Temman Tenjin, and is now worshiped as the god presiding over penmanship. It is entitled *History of the Transmission of the Art of Calligraphy by Sugawara.* The names of four authors appear on the title page.

A still more famous drama by Idzumo and two collaborators is the *Chiushingura*, or *Magazine of Faithful Retainers.* Chikamatsu's five-act arrangement was at this time no longer adhered to, and the *Chiushingura* has eleven acts or scenes. It is a version of the favorite story of the forty-seven ronins. There are no fewer

than forty or fifty plays on this subject, some of them, however, being mere adaptations of previous works.

In their general character Idzumo's plays greatly resemble those of his predecessor. There is the same overcrowding of exciting incidents, the same mixture of comedy and tragedy and the same desire to shock the audience with brutal murders and other enormities enacted on the stage, and to pander to their lewder tastes. Yet Idzumo is in some respects to be preferred to his more famous master. The improbabilities are not so startling, the personages are nearer to ordinary humanity, and their sentiments are less unnatural and less stilted in their expression.

Idzumo died in 1756. He was followed, as playwright for the Takemoto Theatre, by Chikamatsu Hanni, who did his best to attract audiences by startling novelties and spectacular effect. He reduced the share given to poetical narrative and depended more on dialogue. But in his hands the *Joruri* declined sensibly. The public got tired of it, the Takemoto Theatre went into bankruptcy, and after the end of the century this kind of drama became practically extinct.

Tsubouchi.

Tsubouchi, already mentioned as a novelist and critic, has also tried his hand at drama. His *Julius Cæsar* is a version of Shakespeare's drama thrown into the form of *Joruri*, that is, with a thread of poetical narrative and descriptions woven into it. His *Maki no Kata*, published in 1897, depends almost wholly on

dialogue. The small element of *Joruri* which it contains is limited to one of its seven acts. This play is one of a trilogy which deals with the history of the Hojo regents. The time is the beginning of the thirteenth century, and the subject the crimes and intrigues into which Maki no Kata, the wife of the regent, was led by her ambitions on behalf of a favorite son. The *Maki no Kata* is decidedly melodramatic. There are several murders and bloody combats and two suicides by women. But there are also some really forcible scenes, and although no supreme height of excellence is anywhere attained, there is careful workmanship and a gratifying freedom from the extravagances of the earlier school of Japanese dramatists.

In his interesting history of the drama, the Japanese critic Genichiro says: "From the era of Keian to that of Tenwa, 1648-1683, in Yedo, now Tokio, boldness, activity and gayety in the drama were the characteristics which procured popularity; while in Kyota and Osaka the popular plays have as their chief feature tragedy, with its sadness and pain. That these communities had different tastes arose from the fact that the former had maintained its chivalrous and knightly temper, while the latter was rich in the civil and literary spirit. In these three great cities of Japan noted actors appeared at this time in great numbers and vied with each other in zeal for their art. Accordingly dramas found able composers and plays greatly improved. But during the era of Tenwa the ordinance prohibiting the wearing of swords at theatres checked the progress of the drama." To this may be found a parallel in the French theatres of

the days of Molière, when it was found necessary by the authorities to issue a similar prohibition.

Degeneration of the Drama.

The reason for the degeneration of the Japanese drama has generally been attributed to this apparently harmless ordinance. The effect of the order that the samurai, or aristocracy, should not wear their swords at the theatre prevented this class of people from attending, because no samurai would lay aside his sword and thus, even for the time being, become one of the common people. The managers of the theatres, who had been annoyed by their swagger, at first rejoiced over the exclusion of these aristocrats, whose quarrels and manners often caused trouble and bloodshed; but, in the long run, its effect seems to have lowered the standard of Japanese playhouses. The managers were able to maintain order, but the theatres soon lost caste, and, in consequence, vulgarity crept in and plays and performers deteriorated. As a result, we are informed that, while the plays were occasionally historical and worth seeing, the distinguishing features were to be found in social plays, a large majority of which dwelt upon the amorous affairs of men addicted to carousing and fighting, and in which the Yoshiwara and tea-houses, with the geisha girls, seemed to figure largely. In fact, to quote from Genichiro: "The theatre in Japan thus reached the lowest depth of vulgarity, and so continued till the last year of the Tokugawa Shogunate, in 1867."

The plots of the plays during this period of decadence

were of the most tragic character. The favorite themes were the subjugation of banditti, conspiracy, duels, vendetta, assassination, death on the field of battle, quarrels, hara-kiri, the remission of the death penalty, executions, suicides, death on account of love and other blood-curdling and sanguinary episodes. Indeed, it seems that almost every play witnessed in Japan turned on one or more of such incidents.

When asked whether he thought European plays would suit the Japanese, Genichiro replied that he believed *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth* could be adapted for their stage. He had himself once tried to adapt *Hamlet* to the Japanese theatre, but frankly confessed his failure. "There are many beautiful points of sentiment in a play like *Hamlet*," said he, "that would be entirely lost on a Japanese audience. In time we may educate our people to an appreciation of such plays, but the mind of our average theatre-goer could not comprehend the beauties of Shakespeare." In fact, the cultured classes of Japan have never patronized the drama and do not, to any great extent, to-day. They amuse themselves in other ways. No matter how good the play, how clever the actors, educated and fashionable people will not go to the theatre.

In olden times the governing classes of the empire looked upon the stage as a means of giving the lower classes moral instruction in what they chose to call principles of loyalty, filial piety, fidelity and justice. The true meaning of this was the inculcation of a feudal obedience to their superiors. Mixed up with much that was immoral, vulgar and bad, may be found

illustrated the idea that any crime is justifiable in order to show loyalty to your daimio, or liege lord. Hence a favorite plot is the sacrifice of one's own child to advance the interests or save the life of the ruler of a province. Such a crime, with a purpose of this sort in view, as the murder by the father's own hands of his favorite son, or even of a man's wife, would be entirely justifiable. To commit similar crimes at the bidding of parents would also be in accordance with these extravagant and exaggerated notions of loyalty. The voluntary retirement of a daughter to the Yoshiwara, to help indigent parents, is supposed to be a noble trait and would be applauded even to this day by a Japanese audience in a second-class theatre.

It is claimed by Japanese historians that, while the samurai class were permitted to attend dramatic performances, these ideas were less prevalent, and that none of the cruelties already described were seen on the stage. In short, the theatres degenerated into places of amusement for the lower classes, and the standard was gradually lowered until, as Genichiro says, "meekness came to be mistaken for weakness, violence for courage, cruelty for clear-sightedness, and charity for want of courage; in short, the plays ran wild, beyond the borders of human thought and feeling." In fact, the central idea seems to be loyalty and faithfulness, which were regarded as cardinal virtues, to practice which any crime whatsoever was justifiable, and the legal punishment that was incurred in consequence came to be looked upon not only as no disgrace, but as honorable and commendable. One of the first things necessary to improve the Japanese

drama is to purge it of the cruel and inhuman events with which it abounds.

Actresses.

Woman has played a curious and somewhat fitful part in the drama of Japan. When the bard of Avon was writing the greatest plays the world has ever known, there appeared in the province of Idzumo a beautiful dancing girl named Okuni, who not only greatly improved her art, but created a new era in the Japanese drama. When about twenty years of age Okuni left Idzumo for Kioto, and there wrote a number of pieces, and surrounding herself by clever actors played comedies which left their impress upon the Japanese stage. According to tradition, Okuni is represented with her hair in wild confusion, a golden crown upon her head and arrayed in embroidered garments of exquisite beauty. She is also said to have worn the priest's robe with a kamogane and a rosary of crystals hanging from her neck. Again it is related that she clothed herself in elegant male attire, and wore a pair of swords of fine make and a set of miniature boxes in her girdle. The works of this remarkable woman were historical and romantic, and they are known to this day as Okuni-kabuki—the plays of Okuni. Their performance became very popular, not only in Kioto, but in other large cities, Okuni increasing the variety in the art as well as the plot of the play. In fact, those who have studied the history of the Japanese drama declare that the school of activity started by the beautiful and accom-

plished Okuni, of Idzumo, did much to develop some of the best features of Japanese histrionic art.

Two centuries ago most of the performers and all of those best known to fame were women; men in those days being only allotted secondary parts. The enemies of womankind, however, were able to secure an interdict; from 1644 to 1881 the public appearance of women on the stage was forbidden, and men were substituted for them, those who thus personated women being called "onnagata." It is almost impossible for Europeans to tell them from women, so perfectly are they trained, and this will be seen from a glance at the most famous onnagata. Women are now, though slowly, returning to the stage, and at the theatre in Tokio all the performers are women, Yone-hachi being the leading lady. Danjuro, the leading actor, is in favor of women taking parts on the stage with men, and encourages it in his own theatre whenever he finds a woman capable of acting. When the theatre is small they do very well, but there are physical objections in large theatres to the employment of women. The Japanese woman, both through heredity and training, walks with contracted chest and a lily-like droop of the head, not unpleasing to the eye, but fatal to the proper use of the voice, which never carries beyond the first rows. Great physical endurance is also necessary. Tests by the pedometer tell that chief actors walk every day from twelve to twenty miles on the stage, while the strongest Japanese woman, when submitted to the test, could hardly exceed five. This is largely due to their inconvenient dress and the habit of turning in their toes.

Such is the Japanese drama, past and present. Originating centuries ago in the religious rites and mythology of this remarkable people, coupled with dancing, with song and with the music of stringed instruments and the beating of tom-toms and wooden sounding-boards, it has progressed and developed until we find it to-day full of fascination and interest, though capable of great improvement. It has passed through many vicissitudes, and now that the highest nobles can visit the theatre without disgrace and the emperor himself sends for the greatest actors to perform in his presence, it is being restored to its proper place, and already contains much that is beautiful and excellent. Not only are there good actors and actresses in Japan, but there is abundant material for plays to be derived from Japanese mythology, history, war records, without resorting to inhuman crimes, revolting realism or disgusting vulgarity. The Japanese are very fond of statistics, and, as we know, are an exact people. They have an old tradition that sums up a man's character in ten parts. If seven parts are good and three bad, the good must predominate and the bad be buried with his bones; if the reverse, then the good goes to the grave with his ashes, and in history the man ranks as all bad. Applying this formula to the native drama we may safely say that seven parts of it are good, and if those responsible for it would bury the remaining three, or dispose of them in some other effective way, the result would be a great improvement and a much more brilliant future. Nevertheless, we find in the dramatic, as in the other art of this progressive people, much that is good in performance and more

that is excellent in promise. And so it is with their mechanic arts and with their education.

Realism.

The Japanese seem to admire the realistic in drama as in art. The murmur of the populace as the heavy villain is led to execution, and the hoisting of the flag as the body swings into eternity, or as the head drops into the saw-dust, would not satisfy the average Japanese theatre-goer. The smothering of the victim behind the curtains, the startling intelligence that the hero had shot himself in his bed-room, or the heroine had taken poison at daybreak, would simply fall flat with the audiences of Tokio, Osaka and Kioto. Heads trickling with gore, men committing hara-kiri, with every detail, and all other deadly crimes, including such incidents as the castigation or torture of witnesses, are performed in front of the audience. Though the Japanese drama had its origin many centuries ago, first in song and saru-gaku, or monkey music, and then in comedy, its leading dramatic author, Genichiro, frankly admits that "the place for recreation has been turned into something not much different from the infernal regions." In the early days of the drama red cotton or paper took the place of the victim's blood; now, blood-like liquids, and what is called paste crimson, for representing the shedding of blood, is commonly used, especially in the second-class theatres. Scenes of torture and even of crucifixion are frightfully realistic. Though tragedy and pain are too often the themes of the far Eastern stage, the

theatre in Japan is nevertheless improving in tone, and the influence of such men as Genichiro, and the great actor Danjuro, has of late years all been in the direction of elevating the drama.

The most remarkable feature of Japanese drama still remains, however, its intense realism. Nothing is left to the imagination. If an actor enters from the rain, his umbrella and clogs are wet. If he falls into the water, the fact is made evident by his soaked and dripping condition. Worthy of special mention is a scene at the Shintomiza theatre in Tokio, which recently held the audience spell-bound for many minutes at a time, natives and foreigners alike, and yet for most of the time there was no one visible on the stage and no change of setting.

It was a swamp. In the foreground was a small tumble-down hut of temporary make, containing a tripod of sticks with a suspended kettle over a spent fire. Here and there were evidences of recent human presence—a bucket of water, a dipper, a bowl of rice. The rest of the stage was filled to its full depth with the real rushes found in the native swamps, standing upright, and with reeds, trees and grass, all real also. Perfect silence reigned, which became almost painful in its intensity. Then a distant frog croaked and was answered from another part of the marsh. This was several times repeated with wonderful imitation of reality. The leaves of the farther trees rustled as they were shaken in the wind, and the nearer rushes swayed before it. Then far-off was heard the cry of a bird whose note betokens rain. Nearer and nearer came the sound,

and the birds, flying swiftly, crossed the stage like a flash, low, almost among the waving reeds. A slow darkening, a few puffs of wind, a rustle of the reeds and leaves, and patter, patter came the rain drops, water unmistakable, pouring and splashing down between the audience and the dim gray back-ground. A woman entered with dripping umbrella and high-tucked kimono, followed soon after by a man with drawn knife. Then the attack, the struggle and the disappearance of both into the swamp. Then the awful death-hunt in and about and among the rushes, the position only indicated by the reeds, which bent and swayed and hid all but the fierce sounds of the hidden fight for life, the thud of a blow, the terrible gurgles of death, followed by the splash, splash of an artery as it ebbed away a life. The fearful realism of the whole scene and its consummate art were indescribable.

Yet mixed up with this most unreal acting we find most absurd conventionalities. When a combatant is supposed to be killed in battle, it is en règle for him to turn a somersault as he expires. Children never speak in a natural voice, always in piping monotone. On every stage the prompter is a crouching figure hooded and in black, who is supposed to be invisible and is called the kurombo, or black-man. It is almost impossible for a Japanese actor to portray grief and passion naturally. A woman will exhibit indescribable grief in a most ridiculous manner, while a man shows self-control by contortions and grimaces, and lest these should be lost upon the audience, a lighted candle is held on the end of a stick close to the performer's face that

none of the facial expression may be missed. Such are a few of the oddities of the stage, which strike foreigners as absurd.

The Dramatist Genichiro and the Actor Danjuro.

The greatest among living dramatists is Genichiro, the "peerless dramatist, whose compositions are performed at the largest and most refined theatre," and the "highest living authority" on all that appertains to the Japanese stage. Says one who visited him in 1896: "I found the great 'drama-author,' as he calls himself, not only well versed in Chinese and Japanese stage mythology, with a genealogical table of the Japanese drama at his finger ends, but I likewise discovered that he had a clear conception of both the French and the English theatre. Speaking and reading these languages, having studied the European theatre, and heard many of the greatest actors, including Booth and Irving, Genichiro may be said to possess peculiar qualifications for improving the Japanese stage without absolutely Europeanizing it. To aid him in this work he has Hori Koshi Suguru, or Danjuro, as he is known on the boards, the greatest actor in Japan, and the ninth descendant of the original Danjuro, who came to Tokio about A. D. 1600. By far the best dramatic presentations are the direct results of the labors of these two men. The one is undoubtedly a great play-writer, from the Japanese point of view, and the other not only 'the chief actor of Japan,' as his visiting card states, but one of the greatest actors in the world. While Danjuro acts in both the

leading theatres of Tokio, the efforts of Genichiro are largely confined to the furnishing of suitable plays for the Kabukiza, with which both he and the great actor are closely identified.

"Danjuro is undoubtedly the ninth direct descendant of his famous ancestor, who, more than any other one man, lifted the dramatic profession out of the disreputable condition in which it was at the beginning of the seventeenth century. I have the Danjuro family tree on a diagram drawn for me by the great actor's own playwright and friend, Genichiro. It appears from it that the second and third Danjuro were direct male descendants; that the fourth Danjuro was the son of a daughter of the second Danjuro, who married an actor. Then came the fifth and sixth Danjuros, in direct male succession, but the seventh Danjuro was the son of the daughter of the fifth Danjuro, who married a man in private life. The seventh Danjuro had two sons—one, the eighth Danjuro, who died by his own hand in Osaka thirty years ago, and was succeeded by his brother, the present and ninth Danjuro. The surviving actor must be nearly seventy years of age. He has no son, but two charming young daughters, who dress bewitchingly, bow down to the floor most gracefully, lisp a few pretty compliments in exquisitely broken English, and dance divinely.

"Danjuro lives in a commodious house in the theatrical quarter of Tokio. It must be remembered that only of late years has the drama been partially recognized as a respectable occupation, and it is not now in such high esteem as in Europe or America. Danjuro is the only

Japanese actor ever invited to play before the emperor. This he did about ten years ago, and he is prouder of the incident than of all his other achievements. His daughters told me that they observed the annual date of that event as an anniversary, and the tenth anniversary, which took place in June, 1895, was celebrated with important ceremonies and festivities in the Danjuro household. About the only item of European theatrical gossip which interested Danjuro was the fact that Henry Irving, the great English actor, had been knighted by the queen of England. Beyond that fact, the European-American stage was as much a myth to Danjuro as the Japanese-Chinese stage would be to us. There was a time, he told me, when he would have enjoyed a trip to Europe. He had once acted with a Russian actress and had been invited to go to St. Petersburg. Not accepting this, he was now too old, and his health was not good enough to undertake such a change and the excitement of such a journey. He had heard much of America, and was glad to meet American friends, but he would never be able to see our great country.

"General Grant, he said, had honored him by attending his theatre, and among his cherished souvenirs was a beautiful silk stage curtain given him by the great American soldier. The famous actor spoke hopefully of the future of dramatic art in Japan. He believes it can be greatly improved, and is doing what is possible to elevate the taste of the theatre-goer. His invitation to perform before the emperor, Danjuro regarded as a good omen, for such a command had, up to that time, been unheard of in the history of the Japanese stage.

"I was favored with an autograph note from the great actor, inviting me to his house, and also one from Madame Ichi Kawaga, the leading actress of Japan and head of the theatre in which the performers are all women. Both are interesting specimens of Japanese chirography. The interviews which followed the receipt of these polite notes were full of novelty and interest. In the case of Danjuro, after the usual greetings by the servants at the entrance and taking off my shoes, I was asked into a large room, one side of which opened upon a clear pond, in which handsome tame ducks and waterfowl splashed and disported themselves. The garden and grotto work were thoroughly Japanese, and added much to the pleasure of the occasion. One end of the room contained a sort of shrine, where a religious ceremony had been conducted—perhaps the shrine of the actor's ancestors, or possibly some form of celebrating a festival. Velvet cushions and a charcoal box to warm our hands were first brought; then tobacco and pipes. Danjuro appeared, made a profound bow, and seated himself upon his heels on a tatami mat, near the center of the room. Our pipes were lighted, and green tea in tiny cups of rare cloisonné was handed around, followed by sweetmeats of brilliant hues. After we had talked an hour, small tables were placed in front of each guest, on which was clear soup in lacquer bowls, omelet and fish, cooked deliciously; more tea and confections of all kinds; next, small oranges, peeled and divided. Then we partook of saké, poured out by the delicate hands of the host's daughters. Captivating smiles, with innumerable blushes, marked this part of the ceremony.

"Madame Yonehachi, in her invitation to see her play, says: 'We shall begin at nine and continue until six in the evening.' Here we have a feature of the Japanese drama that would hardly suit Europeans. Yet Danjuro practically acts each day during the season or life of a play from ten in the morning until dusk in the evening —that is, he is on and off the stage during that time. Though his hours are longer, he is not subject to the same amount of strain that an European actor taking a leading part would undergo from eight till eleven in the evening. The movement is slower, some plays lasting all day, the situations far apart, while the climax and dialogues dawdle along in truly oriental fashion. Why be in a hurry? The Japanese come to the theatre expecting to stay. Between the acts innumerable swift-footed waiters of both sexes noiselessly run around with luncheon, tea, beer and cigarettes, all of which are served in tiny boxes, which hold from four to six people. To watch the occupants of these boxes is half the fun of the Japanese theatre. The serious-looking, sallow-complexioned men, in their sombre, bluish-gray gowns, form a decided contrast to the gay little butterflies, in the brightest and most picturesque of costumes, fluttering at their side. And the coiffure of the latter, black as shining anthracite, decorated with dangling blossoms, and built up with such exquisite skill that the height and dimensions are nothing short of alarming to the uninitiated. Yet, like the modern sky-scrapers, they do not seem to fall down. The family parties at the Japanese theatres are brimful of jollity. In fact, good nature and fun reign supreme between the

acts, but the signal for the play to begin brings the audience, especially the women, trotting back again. In they come from the several doors, noiselessly pattering along the highly-polished 'flowery ways,' over which the actors are soon to tread, into the little four-by-four boxes, where they sink down upon their heels, prepared to give undivided attention to the measured action of the play."

Peculiar Features of Japanese Drama.

Strange and odd as the performers and audience seem at first, upon becoming more familiar with the Japanese theatre we readily appreciate the excellent quality of much of the acting and the consummate skill displayed in the stage effects. True, the methods are different to ours. Thus, for example, the entrances and exits of the actors through the audience, strike the uninitiated as peculiar and, with other curious differences, have the effect of distracting the mind from the acting; but when we are used to these unusual proceedings, its fine quality becomes apparent. Danjuro is one of the most remarkable of actors, well worthy of comparison with Irving, Booth and Salvini. His range of characters seems even greater than that of his illustrious European contemporaries, including, as it does, not only youth and age, priest and soldier, acrobat and schoolmaster, but the impersonation of female parts, which Danjuro renders with consummate skill. To-day he appears as a handsome, dashing warrior, flashing a sword, on horse-back; to-morrow as a devout priest, with shaven head. His make-up is simply perfect. A powerful and spiritual

princess in one play, he astonishes you with his royal yet feminine bearing, and in another thrills you as the chief character in the magnificent attire of a courtesan.

Japanese plays are not infrequently laid in the Yoshiwara, as is one of the most gorgeous of their spectacular dramas by Genichiro, in which Danjuro takes the leading part. The costumes are superb and their cost, even in Japan, must have been enormous. The procession, as the leading characters slowly pass through the audience on the "flowery way," or elevated walk running from the stage to the front of the theatre, suggests the stately cavalcade at the coronation of an Eastern potentate rather than the annual cherry-blossom festivals of the Yoshiwara. This mode of entrance for a man of Danjuro's age involves a marvelous specimen of acrobatic acting. Clad in magnificent stuffs, stiff with embroidery of gold and cascades of crystals, and wearing high wooden shoes, resembling short stilts, but without firm bracing, he advances, describing first with his right and then with his left foot a complete semi-circle, forming the figure eight, as a skater does on the ice. We have numerous descriptions of the real cherry-blossom festival, as formerly witnessed in the Yoshiwara; but for costly gorgeousness and rich costumes, the procession as put on the stage of Danjuro's theatre, with the old actor in the rôle of the most beautiful woman, certainly surpasses, in bewildering effect, any of these accounts.

The theatres are supported by the middle and lower classes, who go with their whole families. The audience is attentive, enthusiastic, quick to perceive the fine points, very sympathetic and easily moved to tears. It

is no uncommon thing to see two-thirds of the people, men and women alike, stirred by some pathetic scene into weeping uncontrollable, while sobs and sniffles are heard all over the house. Applause by clapping of the hands is sometimes heard, but it is a modern innovation. The native manner is to shout the actor's name or nickname, or by cries of "Ten riyo," or "A hundred riyo," or "A thousand riyo" (a riyo is about seventy-five cents), according to the enthusiasm of the crier.

The popular plays, as already mentioned, are generally founded on some of the many romantic tales or historical deeds of the days of feudal Japan. Some are based on the innumerable fox legends, the fox figuring largely in the folk-lore of the country, and being endowed by the superstitious with the power of metamorphosis and of entering the bodies of men, and, in its changed condition, of working endless woes on the bewitched individual. Many plays have for their motive some every-day scene of domestic life.

The Loyal League.

Probably the most popular drama on the Japanese stage is the *Chiushingura*, or *The Loyal League*, founded on the well-known story of the forty-seven ronins. Of this the people seem never to tire, and whenever it is presented it always draws crowded houses.

The play commences with a quarrel between a mighty lord, Moronaho, and a lesser daimio, or noble, Yenya. The latter, driven to desperation by the overbearing conduct and insults of his superior, draws his

sword and wounds him within the precincts of the royal palace. For this unpardonable offense Yenya is condemned to take his own life by hara-kiri. The scene of this is most thrilling. Two samurai enter to announce his doom, and at almost the same moment Yenya comes in at the back and greets them. A few words pass and one of the samurai reads the decree of death. The preparations for the solemn ceremony are now made with all that nicety which is characteristic of the rite, and no jot of which is omitted in the stage counterfeit. Two straw mats are placed side by side upon the floor, and are covered with a cloth of spotless white. At the corners are little tubes of wood with sprigs of green bamboo therein. When all is ready Yenya kneels on the mats and slipping his arms from the ample sleeves of his white garment leaves himself nude to the waist. Before him, on a low stand of unpainted wood, and wrapped to the point in paper, is placed the short-bladed knife with which the deed is to be done. This Yenya takes in his right hand, and raising it reverently to his head, calls upon those present to witness his obedience. He places the left hand over the right, and pointing the blade inward, plunges it into the abdomen on the left side and with one cut to the right disembowels himself. At that moment, all disordered and dust-covered, in rushes his absent karo, or counsellor, Yuranosuke, who throws himself on the floor in front of his beloved master to receive his dying words. Yenya says gaspingly: "Take this knife—my last gift—exact vengeance." Then slowly, and with painful effort, he draws the bloody blade from his wound, hands it to his faithful retainer, and falls face

downward, dead. It is a piteous scene, acted with all the circumspection and solemn etiquette which for centuries has been the accompaniment of the hara-kiri. The realism of its bloody and repulsive details is terrible.

With his life Yenya forfeits all his property. His followers are scattered, but forty-seven of them, under the leadership of Yuranosuke, swear to avenge their master's wrongs. This conspiracy is the motive of the Chiushingura.

After Yenya's death and the confiscation of his castle, his followers, named ronins, or wave-men, are again scattered, and Yuranosuke goes to Kioto to carry on his schemes in that gay capital, living at the Ichi Riki tea-house, where he leads a life of drunkenness and gayety, the better to deceive his enemy and conceal his design.

The next scene is in one of the rooms of this famous resort. The mats are covered with a bevy of girls, dancing and singing while clapping hands in unison to the music. Into this gay throng staggers the drunken Yuranosuke. He is quickly surrounded by the tea-house girls, who bandage his eyes and make him the ono of a game of blindman's buff. He is poked and pulled, as he rolls from place to place, endeavoring in vain to catch the girls who flit about like butterflies. Suddenly the revelry is hushed by the entrance of three solemn-looking ronins, seeking their drunken leader, for even they are deceived by his pretended dissipation. Yuranosuke seizes the nearest of his followers and calls for the forfeit, whilst the disgusted samurai holds his sword out of reach of the wandering fingers. Yuranosuke soon finds out his mistake, and tears off his bandage with a

deeply muttered oath; but when they talk of attacking Moronaho and of vengeance, he laughs at them, becomes apparently more besotted than ever, and at last falls asleep in their presence. Thus they leave him.

He is awakened by his son, who brings him a letter from the North. Its delivery is seen by the watchful spy, Kudaiu, a retainer of Moronaho, sent to Kioto to observe the doings of the conspirators. Kudaiu sups with Yuranosuke, and, when the latter leaves the room for a minute, hides himself under the veranda in the hope of learning the contents of the letter. Yuranosuke, on his return, finding Kudaiu gone, looks about for a safe place in which to read his missive. He stands at last beneath the hanging lantern on the veranda, and, as he reads, unrolls the lengthy scroll. A few minutes later Karu, one of the tea-house girls, coming to an adjoining window, beholds the quiet figure. Consumed with curiosity, she procures a mirror, and, seating herself with her back to the lantern, holds up the bright metal and reads the written words reflected on its polished surface. Meanwhile Yuranosuke is all intent upon the letter, and, as it unrolls, its fluttering end falls to the ground. Kudaiu crawls toward it and just as he tears off a portion, one of Karu's hair-pins drops with a resonant ring to the pavement below. As Yuranosuke quickly rolls up the paper and thrusts it behind him, he notices its jagged end, and Kudaiu's absence is explained. He seizes a sword, plunges it down through a crack in the veranda, and pierces the spy below in the back. The wretch is dragged out and dispatched.

This is one of the most stirring episodes in the play,

and rarely has been seen a finer piece of acting than Danjuro's rendering of the character of Yuranosuke. His delineation of pretended besottedness, covering the keen alertness of a man in whom every sense is active, who is under the necessity of deceiving his rollicking companions, the spies about him, and even his fellow-conspirators, is wonderful, judged even by western standards.

The next act is laid in Yuranosuke's house at Yamashima. Honzo, who prevented Yenya from following up his first blow and killing Moronaho, is on the floor dying from a wound received from Rikiya, Yuranosuke's son. Honzo tells his hearers that he has sought this death as an atonement for his error in so interfering, and in hope that his expiation will remove the obstacles that would prevent the betrothal of his daughter to Rikiya.

"Honzo," says Yuranosuke to him, "we have been taught that the just man hates the crime and not the criminal. It is true we did hold a grudge against you; but now, as you are not long for this world, I will show you my most secret thought," and, stepping back, he pushes aside the screens and reveals to the dying man two tombs of snow.

Tonase, Honzo's wife, with her woman's instinct, understands. "Ah!" she cries, "they will slay their chief's enemy, but will serve no second master. They will perish as yonder snow must perish, rather than prove disloyal to the memory of Yenya."

The plan of the attack is then explained, and Honzo, expressing his delight at its completeness, draws from the folds of his gown a piece of paper and hands it to

Rikiya, saying that it is a list of wedding gifts. It is in realty a plan of Moronaho's castle, the one thing needed to give action to the conspiracy.

Several acts follow this, leading up to the last, which is a realistic storming of the stronghold of the league's enemy. After a long and bloody fight and a diligent search, Moronaho is discovered in a charcoal-house, and a dark lantern flashed upon his face reveals his identity. He is dispatched with the knife with which Yenya committed hara-kiri, and vengeance is accomplished.

This is the barest outline of a drama too long to be presented in its entirety in a single day. A vein of fun and a strain of love, with an intermixture of different stories, all more or less connected with the play, give color to its rendering and have the effect of toning down its more sombre scenes.

The play is founded on historical facts, upon which has been grafted enough fiction to make up the romantic story. The events occurred early in the eighteenth century; the quarrel in the palace, the hara-kiri, the plotting, the revenge, took place as told in the play, and the vengeance was accomplished on the 30th of January, 1703. The fame of the doughty deeds of the forty-seven spread far and wide. The slain enemy of the clan was a man of high rank, but the popular sympathy was with the conspirators, who were finally permitted to inflict upon themselves a glorious death by hara-kiri.

The devoted clansmen were buried, grouped around the grave of their beloved master, in the grounds of the temple of Sengaku in Shinagawa, an outskirt of the Japanese capital. It is a place of reverent pilgrimage,

and is visited by thousands annually. Some of the relics of the loyal band are still shown. The knife with which their lord committed his "Happy Dispatch" is there, also the receipt from the relatives for the head of their hated enemy, which was delivered after it had been laid upon the grave of the master. Parts of the coats-of-mail and remnants of clothing are sacredly kept, and in one of the houses in the grounds are the effigies of the ronins, dressed in the conventional suits of white and black.

Foreigners' Impressions of the Japanese Theatre.

Of all the varied phases of the strange life that passes before the visitor to Japan, none is more interesting or more fully repays study than the theatre. So competent an observer as Percival Lowell says, after tracing the evolution of the theatre in far-Eastern countries: "In Japan the result has been one of the finest stages the world has produced. In fact, it is not going too far to rank the Shintomiza, the great theatre of Tokio, as but little inferior to the Théatre Français." It is somewhat remarkable that this subject should have received so little attention from the writers of the many books about Japan. Generally their accounts are limited to descriptions of the audience, and when they come to speak of the stage they confine their observations almost entirely to ridiculing the really absurd conventions of the native drama, or pass over it in a superficial way.

The tide of Western civilization, which has risen so high in modern Japan, has swept away all that curious mediæval life which the shallow accounts of travellers

and the more exact researches of Orientalists have as yet only imperfectly revealed to us; but the spirit of the feudal chivalry, the ceremonious etiquette, the bloody hara-kiri, and all the brilliant color of that ancient life, are still preserved, in mimic picture, in that great storehouse of all that is romantic in the story of old Japan—the stage. From among the common-places of the life of the modern capital one turns with feelings of relief to its spirited drama, to study there the curious customs and superstitions of olden time.

Modern Japanese Theatres.

The theatre buildings are generally of flimsy, barn-like construction, for the frequency and devastation of the great fires make substantial buildings a poor investment. In the interior the main floor is divided, like a great chess-board, into innumerable squares; there is a revolving stage, much like a locomotive turntable, on which two scenes may be set back-to-back, and there are raised ways which lead through either side of the auditorium to the stage. Travellers supposed to be coming from a distance, or drawn in a jinrikisha, or entering in great haste, or when pursued, all come to the stage from the back of the auditorium along the flower paths. Here is the scene of prolonged discussion and combats, and armed bands, approaching to make an assault or engage in battle, proceed by it to the stage. At the outer gate, in the rear of the auditorium, knocking is often heard, and animated conversations take place there as well as on the stage.

The curtain runs on guiding strings to either side of the stage. It is generally of silk, and frequently belongs to the star—a gift from his admirers. Elaborate stage settings with mechanical accesories are unknown. The scenery is always well-fitted to the play, but occasionally it is likely to shock one's sense of proportion, for it is sometimes quite diminutive, though houses and rooms are of the usual size. In costuming, the Japanese stage has no superior. The closest attention is paid to this branch of the art, and dresses are scrupulously faithful to their originals as regards time, place and condition. There only can now be seen those beautiful and gorgeous habiliments which were part of the real life of old Japan, and which are faithfully and accurately produced on its modern stage. Sometimes these dresses are heirlooms, hundreds of years old and of priceless value, while the skill of the Japanese actor in "making-up" is nowhere excelled. Though actors have in these later days won reputation and social recognition, they were rated very low in society in the olden time.

IV.

Hindoo Drama and Literature.

Two hundred years ago Europeans regarded with feelings of wonder and awe the vast empire that extended from the heights of the Himalaya to Cape Comorin, the once mysterious regions,

> Where the gorgeous East
> Showered o'er her kings barbaric pearls and gold.

Here were the realms of sovereigns who sat on ivory thrones, rode abroad among a thousand elephants, and seemed to realize all the marvels of the *Arabian Nights*. All this vast territory, now parcelled into presidencies, where the British government issues its mandates to as many nations as did the great king of Israel, is strewn with the wrecks of mighty monarchies and with the moldering monuments of religions whose origin is lost in the depths of by-gone ages. Here are the remnants of a civilization, compared with which our own is but of yesterday, stretching far beyond the reach of historic record, the traces of religions which have influenced the fate of more human beings than are now living on the face of the earth, while, according to recent estimates,

the followers of Buddha and Brahma still outnumber all Christian sects combined.

Ancient India.

To those who delight in studying the history of man, there can be nothing more fascinating than the civil, religious and literary history of this remarkable group of nations, since their monuments have been more thoroughly explored and their writings made known through the research of such European scholars as Horace Wilson and Sir William Jones. Many are the curious and inexplicable secrets that have come to light from a closer acquaintance with a language which has proved to be strongly allied with the Persian, the Greek, the Latin and even Teutonic tongues; from the discovery of the great pantheistic system of religion which comprehended almost the whole of Asia and Egypt. Much has been learned from the laws and civil polity of a people whose castes have remained unaltered since the days of Alexander the Great, from a philosophy which, like that of Greece and modern Europe, has passed through every gradation of idealism, materialism, skepticism and eclecticism. So also with poetry, which, however encumbered with fable and mythology, abounds in passages of striking grandeur, of the most exquisite delicacy and tenderness, of infinite variety and gracefulness of fancy, and also of the purest simplicity.

In this great empire of Southern Asia, containing half the area of the United States and with four times its

population, there is but a feeble interest except among a handful of Oriental scholars, though the country is full of wonders greater than any recorded in the annals of ancient or modern nations. Its records extend far back to the twilight of history, long antedating the dawn of Greek civilization.

Races of India.

At the dawn of Hindoo history we find here two races struggling for the possession of the soil. One was a fair-skinned people, who had recently entered by the North-western passes, of Aryan lineage, speaking a stately language and worshipping powerful gods. The other was a race of a lower type, which had long dwelt in the land, but which the lordly new-comers drove before them into the mountains, or reduced to servitude on the plains. The pure descendants of these two races are less than twenty millions for each, and it is of their mixed progeny, sprung chiefly from the ruder stock, that the masses of the people are composed.

The conquered tribes were an obscure people, who in the absence of a race-name of their own, may be called non-Aryans, or aborigines. They have left no written records, for the use of letters or even of hieroglyphics was unknown to them. All that has come down to us from the work of their hands is the rude stone circles and mounds, beneath which they buried their dead. We know also that they had learned how to make pots of hard, thin earthenware, that they fought with iron weapons and wore ornaments of copper and gold. They were also acquainted with the use of money. In the

upper soils of large areas, earlier remains show that these ancient tomb-builders formed but one link in a chain of primeval races. Long before their advent India was peopled by tribes unacquainted with the metals, who hunted and made war with polished flint axes and implements of stone, similar to those unearthed in Europe and America. Even these were the successors of yet ruder beings, who have left their agate knives and rough flint weapons in the Narbada valley. In front of this far-stretching background of the bronze and stone ages we see the aborigines beaten down by the newly-arrived Aryan race.

Subjugated Tribes.

The subjugated tribes were named by their conquerors dasyus, or enemies, and dasas, or slaves, the latter remaining to this day a common family name among the lower classes of Bengal. The Aryans from the North prided themselves on their fair complexion, and the Sanskrit for color came to mean race or caste. Their earliest poets, at least three thousand and perhaps four thousand years ago, praised in the Veda their gods who, slaying the dasyus, protected the Aryan color, who subjected the black-skins to the Aryan men. Moreover the Aryan, with his finely formed features, loathed the squat Mongolian faces of the aborigines, and the Vedic hymns abound in scornful epithets for the primitive tribes, as noseless or flat-nosed disturbers of sacrificers, gross feeders on flesh, lawless, without gods and without rites. As time went on, and these rude tribes were

driven back into the forest, they were painted in still more hideous shapes, till they became the monsters and demons of the Aryan poet and priest. Thus, their race name, dasyu, or enemy, came to signify a goblin or devil, as the old Teutonic word for enemy has become the English fiend.

Nevertheless, all of them were not savages. We hear of wealthy dasyus, and even the Vedic hymns speak of their seven castles and ninety forts. In the later Sanskrit literature the Aryans make alliance with aboriginal princes, and at the beginning of authentic history we find some of the most powerful kingdoms of India ruled by dynasties of non-Aryan descent; nor were they without religious rites and craving after future life. Says a very ancient Sanskrit treatise: "They adorn the bodies of their dead with gifts, with raiment, with ornaments, imagining that thereby they will attain the world to come." These ornaments were pieces of bronze, copper and gold, such as are now dug from beneath their rude stone monuments. In the great Sanskrit epic which describes the advance of the Aryans into Southern India, a non-Aryan chief describes his race as of fearful swiftness, unyielding in battle, in color like a dark blue cloud. Pushed back by the Aryans from the plains, these primitive people have lain hidden in the recesses of the mountains, like the remains of extinct animals which zoologists find in hill-caves. Thus India forms a great museum of races, in which man can be studied from his lowest to his highest stage of civilization; and no study can prove more interesting than that of a people so numerous and varied, with so much

of antiquity behind them, and with a history at once unique and inviting.

The Aryan Race.

From the noble Aryan race are descended not only the Brahman and the Rajput, but all the nations of western Europe, and their vigorous offspring in North America and every quarter of the world. From its earliest home in Central Asia certain branches started for the east and others for the west. By one of the offshoots of the latter was founded the Persian kingdom; by another the Hellenic States; by a third was reared the city on the seven hills, which grew into imperial Rome. Meanwhile other branches had gone forth eastward, forcing their way in powerful bands through the passes of the Himalayas, and gradually spreading over India.

Of the Aryan tribes in their camping-grounds in Central Asia we know but little. It is believed, however, that they roamed over the grassy steppes with their cattle, making long halts to raise crops of grain. They had tamed most of the domestic animals, were acquainted with some of the metals and wore clothes of woven fabrics. They lived a hardy life in these chilly Asiatic highlands, and ages afterward, when Brahman priests prayed for long life in the sultry plains of India, they asked for a hundred winters. For unnumbered centuries the forefathers of the Englishman, the American, the German, the Roman, the Greek, the Persian and the Hindoo dwelt side by side on the great Asiatic plateau, speaking the same tongue and worshipping the

same gods. Though the languages of Europe and India seem, at first sight, widely apart, they are in fact merely different forms of the original Aryan. Thus the names most commonly used in family life, as father and mother, brother and sister, are the same, whether used on the banks of the Ganges, the Tiber, the Thames or the Mississippi.

Literature.

The oldest poetry of the Hindoos is contained in their Vedas and Puranas, the former constituting the Scriptures and the latter the traditions of their faith. Midway between them, in point of antiquity, are the two great epic poems known as the *Ramayana* and the *Maha-Bharata*, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Sanskrit literature. The *Maha-Bharata*, or Great Bharata, contains eighteen parts and one hundred thousand distichs.

It relates the history of the war between the great heroic families, the sons of Pandu and the sons of Kuru. The former, after being driven from the throne usurped by the younger race, return with a mighty army to claim their ancestral sceptre. The battle is about to begin. On one side the tall and valiant Bhishma, leader of the sons of Kuru, harangues his followers in a voice that "thunders like a roaring lion," blowing his shell of battle, to which the conchs and all the warlike music of his host reply. On the other side appears Arjuna in his splendid car, drawn by white horses and attended by the god Krishna. All his captains likewise blow their conchs and the combat opens. But at this critical moment occurs the remarkable episode called the *Bhag-*

arat-Gita, or Divine Song, which, in the form of a dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, sets forth the doctrines of the Brahministic pantheism.

The Divine Song.

Arjuna orders his chariot to be driven into the space between the two armies. He surveys the opposing hosts, each composed of his kindred, brothers in arms against brothers; a deep melancholy passes over him, and thus he addresses Krishna, who stands by his side:

My kindred, Krishna, I behold all standing for the battle armed;
My every quavering member fails, and wan and withered is my face;
Cold shuddering runs through all my frame; my hair stands stiff upon my head;
My bow falls from my nerveless hand, and all my burning skin is parched;
I cannot move, I cannot stand; within my reeling spirit swims;
On every side, O fair-haired god, I see the dark, ill-omened signs.
My kindred when I've slain in fight, what happiness remains for me?
For victory, Krishna, care not I, nor empire, nor the bliss of life.
For what is empire? what is wealth? And what, great king, is life itself,
When those for whom we thirst for wealth and toil for empire and for bliss
Stand in the battle-field arrayed and freely peril wealth and life?
Teachers, sons, fathers, grandsires, uncles, nephews, cousins, kindred, friends,

Not for the triple world would I, O Madhui's conqueror!
slaughter them;
How much less for this narrow earth, though they would
sternly slaughter me.

Arjuna dwells further on the miseries of the civil war, the extinction of noble races, the suspension of splendid family alliances, the interruption of all sacred rites, the general impiety, and the license among females. He then sinks back in his chariot, lays aside his bow and arrows, and waits the answers of the god. Krishna sternly reproves his tameness of spirit. Arjuna replies in a still sadder tone, and declares that he had rather beg his bread than win empire by the slaughter of his kindred. The reply of Krishna breathes the spirit of pantheistic fatalism. Under this system the murder, the massacre of the dearest kindred, are indifferent. Death and life are but unimportant modifications of the same being, and the immortality of the soul becomes an argument for the utter disregard of human suffering in the present state of being:

Thou mourn'st for those thou shouldst not mourn, albeit thy
words are like the wise;
For those who live and those who die may never mourn the
truly wise.
Ne'er was the time when I was naught, nor thou, nor yonder
kings of earth.
Hereafter ne'er shall be the time when one of us shall cease
to be.
The soul within its mortal frame glides on through childhood,
youth and age;
Then in another form renewed, renews its stated course again.
All indestructible is he that spread the living universe,

And who is he that shall destroy the work of the indestructible?
Corruptible these bodies are that wrap the everlasting soul,
The eternal, unimaginable soul. Whence on to battle, Bharata,
For he that thinks to slay the soul, or he that thinks the soul is slain,
Are fondly both alike deceived; it is not slain, it slayeth not;
It is not born, it doth not die; past, present, future knows it not.
Ancient, eternal and unchanged, it dies not with the dying frame.
Who knows it incorruptible and everlasting and unborn,
What heeds he whether he may slay, or fall himself in battle slain?
As their old garments men cast off, anon new raiment to assume,
So casts the soul its worn-out frame and takes at once another form.
The weapon cannot pierce it through, nor waste it the consuming fire;
The liquid waters melt it not, nor dries it up the parching wind;
Impenetrable and unlearned, impermeable and undried,
Perpetual, ever-wandering, firm, indissoluble, permanent,
Invisible, unspeakable; thus deeming, wherefore mourn for it?
But didst thou think that it was born, and didst thou think that it could die?
Even then thou shouldst not mourn for it with idle grief, O Bharata.
Whate'er is born must surely die; whate'er can die is born again.
Wherefore the inevitable doom thou shouldst not mourn, O Bharata.

Arjuna listens with deep submission and reverence, and by degrees draws from Krishna the whole philosophy of religion concerning the nature of the gods, the universe, the supreme good, and the highest wisdom. As

to the comparative merits of an active or contemplative life, so freely agitated in the Grecian school, the *Bhagavat-Gita* departs from the usual doctrine of the East and soars to a loftier mysticism. The highest perfection to which a human soul can attain is action without passion; the mind is to be entirely independent of external objects; to preserve its undisturbed serenity it should have the conscious power of withdrawing all its senses within itself, "as the tortoise draws all its limbs within its shell." Action is necessary, but it must produce no emotion, no sensation on the calm spirit within. Whatever may be their consequences, however important, however awful, events ought to be unfelt and almost unperceived by the impassive mind, and on this principle Arjuna is to execute the fatal slaughter upon his kindred without the least feeling of sorrow or fear or compunction. The soul in this state of unbroken quietude,

> Floats like the lotus on the lake unmoved, unruffled by the tide.

The senses are employed in their separate functions, but the soul maintains its stately inactivity.

The occupations and privileges of the holy anchorites approach the highest perfectibility. Their duty is to keep all the avenues to the senses closed and to retain the soul within itself so that they may attain on earth the glorious prerogative of seeing all things in God and discerning the divine Unity which comprehends all things. After death they ascend to and are absorbed into Brahm, the great primal spirit. If, through their own want of

resolution, or cut short by death, they depart before they have accomplished their task, they may be born again, after many ages, in some pious family, recommence their course and start afresh from the point of holiness and advancement at which they broke off during their former life.

Krishna gradually develops his own nature and at length distinctly proclaims himself an avatar of the supreme deity, Brahma himself, from whom all things emanate, into whom all are reabsorbed. Rising by degrees, he first declares himself to be whatever is most excellent in the whole of nature. He is the soul in the body; among the stars the most splendid; among mountains, Meru; among rivers, the Ganges; among words, the mystic monosyllable; the noblest of animals, of birds and fish; among the letters, A; among the seasons, spring, and what is most extraordinary, among frauds, gambling with dice. Whatever, in short, is preëminent or splendid derives its quality from being, as it were, a portion of the divine essence. He even goes so far as to assert that as god he is not merely all existence but likewise all non-existence.

Immortality and death am I; I am what is and what is not.

Still there is a distinction between the deity and the universe which is illustrated in the following similitude:

As the wide permeating air fills all the ether's boundless space,
So deem ye that indwells in me the sum of all created things.

And by another in which the universe is represented as a chain of pearls suspended from the supreme being. Arjuna implores the deity that he may enjoy the sacred privileges of beholding the godhead in its real nature. Krishna assents to his petition, and purifies his eyesight for the insupportable vision:

Behold my million forms divine of every kind and shape and hue,
Wonders ne'er seen by mortal eye thou shalt behold, O Bharata.
Yet with thine earthly vision thou that mystic sight may'st not behold;
I give to thee an eye divine to gaze on all my mysteries.

The veil of mortal sense is removed, and the god appears as he is:

As from a thousand suns the lights were blazing over all the heaven,
Even such the full magnificence of that o'erweening splendor shone,
The unity of all the world and all their multiformity
Embodied in the god of gods at once the son of Pandu saw.

In an agony of terror, his hair uplifted, his head on high, his hands clasped in supplication, Arjuna addresses the awful being:

All beings, god, in thee I see, and every animated tribe,
And Brahma on his lotus throne, and all the wise and heavenly host.
I see thee with thy countless arms and sides and visages and eyes,
Infinite on every side, without beginning, middle, end,

Thou wear'st the crown, thou wield'st the club, the fatal disk—
on every side
Intense, immeasurable light, in every part of blazing sun.

The poet dwells much longer on the magnificence of the vision; but at length the deity assumes a terrific appearance, for as all things emanate from, so all things are reabsorbed into this universal being. He is not only the creator and origin, but likewise the destroyer and termination of all created things, and is represented as a being into whose immense and horrid jaw the whole human race precipitates itself and is swallowed up:

Even as the torrent rivers pour to Ocean's all-absorbing flood,
Even so the heroes of mankind rush headlong to thy flaming
mouth.
What art thou in that dreadful shape? All hail to thee, thou
mightiest god!
Thy form primeval I would know, yet may not guess thy dread
design.

Krishna replies, and brings back the whole description to the point from which they set forth, as he began, with the same lesson of inexorable fatalism:

Time, the destroyer, I prepared to extinguish all yon armed
host.
Save thee, shall not a man survive in that proud battle line
arrayed.
Wherefore arise, the glory win, defeat the foe, enjoy the
throne;
By me already are they slain; fate's passive instrument art
thou.
Slay Dron and Bhishma, Jagathrath and Karm, and all the valiant host.

Strike them, already struck by me; be fearless and be conqueror.

The Nalus.

The Nalus, or Nala, is another episode of the Maha Bharata, but of an entirely different description. It is a poem full of pathetic interest, and if there is anything of Indian song, translated into European languages, that is likely to attract general atention, it is this beautiful story, which requires only a poet's hand to transplant it in its living freshness to a foreign clime. Nala, the monarch of Nishadha, centred in his person all the noble qualities that could distinguish an Indian monarch. He surpassed all kings in justice, all men in beauty, and he was unrivalled in the management of horses. Bhima, the king of Vidarbha, had an only daughter, the most beautiful and modest of her sex—the gentle Damajanti. These two perfect beings became mutually enamored, each one esteeming the other's admirable qualities. Wandering in the woods, one day, Nala beholds a flock of birds with golden wings, who offer to convey the tidings of his passion to the ear of the princess. He accepts their proposal and the birds set forth on their mission:

Flew away the swans rejoicing, to Vidarbha straight they flew,
To Vidarbha's stately city, there by Damajanti's feet
Down with drooping plumes they settled, and she gazed upon the flock,
Wondering at their forms so graceful, where amid her maids she sat.
Sportively began the damsels all around to chase the birds;
Scattering flew the swans before her, all about the lovely grove.

Lightly ran the nimble maidens, every one her bird pursued;
But the swan that through the forest gentle Damajanti followed
Suddenly in human language spake unto the princess thus:
Damajanti, in Vidarbha dwells a noble monarch, Nala.
Fair in form as the Aswinas, peerless among men is he,
Like Kandharba in his beauty, like a god in human form—
Truly if that thou wert wedded to this man, O peerless princess,
Beautiful would be thy children, like to him, thou slender maid.
We have seen gods and Gandharvas, men, the Serpents, and the Rishis,
All we've seen, but ne'er the equal have we seen of noble Nala.
Pearl art thou among all women; Nala is the pride of men.

The swans receive a favorable answer from the princess and take flight. The kings of all the earth, and all the chieftians and warriors who aspire to the hand of this fair Helen of the East, are summoned to an assemblage where the princess is to designate the favored suitor by throwing a wreath of flowers about his neck. The roads to the court of Vidarbha are crowded with rajahs and kings, and groan beneath the weight of steeds and cars and elephants. Nala, of course, is among them, but on his way he encounters four formidable rivals; Indra, the god of the firmament; Agni, the god of fire; Varuna, the god of waters, and Yama, the god of the infernal regions. They declare that they have come to seek the hand of the lovely Damajanti, and adjure Nala by his piety and allegiance to the gods to undertake the ungracious task of bearing their message. He remonstrates, but piety overcomes his passion, and suddenly, by the divine aid, he finds himself transported into the bower of the princess:

There he saw Vidarbha's maiden, girt with all her virgin bands,
Bright in beauty full of softness, worthy of her noble blood;
Every limb in round proportion, slender sides and lovely eyes;
Even the moon's soft gleam despising in her own o'erpowering brightness.
As he gazed, his love grew warmer to the softly smiling maid,
Yet to keep his troth, his duty, all his passion he suppressed.

He delivers the message of the gods, but the maiden declares that even in their presence she will select the noble Nala.

But a new difficulty arises; for when the assembly is met together Damajanti discovers, to her dismay, five Nalas, each of the deities having assumed his features, form and dress. She supplicates them, and moved with compassion, they stand confessed, with feet that do not touch the ground, eyes that do not close, bodies casting no shadow, and crowned with chaplets of celestial amaranth. The form of Nala himself is distinguished by the opposite of all these attributes, and

Modestly the large-eyed maiden lifted up his garment's hem;
Round his shoulders threw she lightly the bright zone of radiant flowers.

The assembly breaks up amid the applause of the gods and the lamentations of unsuccessful suitors. The nuptials are celebrated; Nala and his bride are blest with two children, and both are models of virtue and beloved by their subjects.

But the course of true love never runs smooth. On their return from the assembly the gods had met the

fierce and vindictive Kali and another deity, who swore eternal vengeance against Nala. In an unlucky hour Nala is guilty of an act of impurity through omitting a certain ablution, and the demon Kali at once enters into him, perverting his understanding and changing his entire disposition, so that only one virtue remains—the love of Damajanti. He plays at dice, loses his wealth, his palaces, his kingdom, and even his clothes, so that nothing remains but Damajanti herself. They are driven forth into the wilderness, with but one garment between them; for a bird has flown away with the only one that Nala had retained, mocking the spendthrift gambler. They are also proscribed by an edict, which makes it a capital crime to afford them assistance or receive them under any roof. Nala persuades his miserable wife to abandon him to his fate, and retire to her father's court, where her children have already been sent. The following is her reply:

Truly all my heart is breaking, and my sinking members fail,
When, O king, thy desperate counsel once I think on, once again.
Robbed of kingdom, robbed of riches, naked, worn with thirst and hunger,
Shall I leave thee in the forest, shall I wander from thee far?
When thou, sad and famine-stricken, thinkest of thy former bliss,
In the wildwood, O my husband, I will soothe thy weariness.
Like a wife is no physician, in a state so bad as thine;
Medicine none is like her kindness—Nala, speak not I the truth?

Nala promises that they shall not part, but overcome by the evil spirit within him, he determines to abandon

her while she is sleeping; cuts off part of her single garment and leaves her lying half naked on the hard, cold ground. He entreats for her the protection of the gods, but trusts to a still surer safeguard, and that is her virtue. Damajanti's chief support is her deep, ardent and self-sacrificing love for her faithless husband.

Damajanti woke, the beauteous, in the wildwood, full of dread.
When she did not see her husband, overpowered with grief and pain,
Loud she shrieked in her first anguish—Where art thou, Nishardha's king?
Mighty king! my sole protector! Ah! my lord, desert'st thou me?
Oh! I'm lost, undone forever; helpless in the wildwood left.
Faithful once to every duty wert thou, king, and true in word;
True in word art thou to leave me, slumbering in the forest thus?
Couldst thou then depart, forsaking thy weak, faithful, once-loved wife,
Her that never sinned against thee, now, alas! so sinned against?
Oh, I fear! thou famous conqueror, shew thee to me, O my lord.

Her adventures are as strange and varied as ever happened to errant damsel in romance. She is in danger from a deadly serpent, and is saved by a huntsman, only to fall into greater peril from his unhallowed desires. She prays for divine aid, and the huntsman falls dead at her feet. She approaches a sacred mountain and thus addresses its Genius:

O thou holy, honored mountain, heavenward rising, widely famed,
Refuge of the helpless, noble; hail, thou pillar of the earth!

Reverent I approach and hail thee—I, the daughter of a king.
Hast thou haply seen my Nala, wandering in the savage woods?
Why repliest thou not, O mountain, nor consol'st me with thy voice?
Her in anguish, thine own daughter, her so lone, so full of dread?

Presently Damajanti descends into a quiet valley, inhabited by hermits, who are clothed in the bark of trees. Amazed at her beauty, they worship her as a divinity:

Speak, O thou of form so heavenly; who art thou and what thy purpose?
Of the wood art thou the goddess, or the mountain-goddess thou?
Or the river nymph, the beauteous? Blessed spirit, speak the truth.

Her next adventure is extremely picturesque. She meets a caravan of travelling merchants, who also adore her as a celestial being, and gladly admit her into their cavalcade. At nightfall their tents are pitched by a beautiful stream, covered with lotus flowers.

When the midnight came, all noiseless came in silence deep and still,
Weary slept the band of merchants. Lo! a herd of elephants
Came to drink the mountain river, oozing moisture from their temples.
When the caravan they gazed on, the tame elephants they scented,
Forward ran they, wild and furious, tossing fierce their murderous trunks;
Irresistible the onset of the rushing, ponderous beasts,
As the peak from some high mountain thundering rolls into into the valley.

Strewn was all the way before them with the boughs, the limbs of trees.
On they crashed to where the travellers slumbered by the lotus lake;
Trampled down without a struggle, helpless on the earth they lay.
Woe, O woe! shrieked out the merchants; wildly some began to fly,
In the forest thickets plunging; some stood gasping, blind with dread.
Many, miserably shrieking, cast them down upon the earth;
Many climbed the trees in anguish, or plunged deep beneath the waves.

The disaster is ascribed to the presence of Damajanti, who is forced to fly, and at length reaches a hospitable city, where, though half naked and worn with toil and sorrow, she is adored for her beauty and received with the greatest kindness. Finally she is discovered by some wandering Brahmins and restored to her home, where she proclaims another assemblage with a view to a second marriage. This is an unpardonable offence in a lady of her rank, but her real object is the discovery of Nala.

The adventures of Nala meanwhile are hardly less romantic; he has an encounter with an enchanted serpent; his appearance is entirely changed, and in this disguise he obtains an appointment as master of the horse at the court of Oude. Rituparna, king of Oude, determines to become a candidate for the hand of the princess, and sets forth with Nala as charioteer. As they enter the city of king Bhima, Damajanti recognizes the sound of her husband's trampling steeds.

All her heart was thrilled with wonder as she heard the welcome sound;

On they seemed to come, as Nala drove of yore his trampling steeds;
Damajanti heard and trembled at the old familiar sound.

The princess employs every artifice to discover her husband; she suspects the charioteer about whom all is wonderful and mysterious. The gates open of their own accord to let him in; self-kindled fire is ever ready at his call, and the water flows toward him when he is in need of it. She procures some of his food and recognizes the well-known flavor of her husband's cooking. By her handmaid she sends her children to him, and on seeing them he bursts into tears. Damajanti contrives an interview, and thus questions the mysterious stranger:

Hast thou ever seen Mahaka, an upright and noble man,
Who departed and abandoned in the woods his wife that slept,
The beloved wife and blameless, in the wildwood worn with grief?
Him who was my chosen husband, him for whom I scorned the gods?
Could he leave the true, the loving, her that hath his children borne?

Nala can conceal himself no longer; but the thought that his wife is about to take a second husband rankles in his heart, and he rebukes her with sternness. Damajanti thus protests her innocence:

He through all the world that wanders, witness the all-seeing Wind,
Let him now of life bereave me, if in this 'gainst thee I've sinned.
And the Sun that ever moveth o'er the bosom of the deep,

Let him now of life bereave me, if in this 'gainst thee I've sinned.
Witness, too, the Moon that travels through the midst of all the world;
Let her too of life bereave me, if in this 'gainst thee I've sinned.

These three gods are those that govern the three worlds—so let them speak.

If these gods can say with justice, "Cast her off," so let it be.
Thus adjured, a solemn witness spake the Wind from out the air:
She hath done or thought no evil, Nala, it is truth I speak.
King, the treasure of her virtue Damajanti well hath guarded;
We ourselves have seen and watched her closely for three livelong years.
Even as thus the Wind was speaking, flowers fell showering all around,
And the god's sweet music sounded, floating on the soft west wind.

Nala reassumes his old form, and the poem ends with his winning back all that he had lost, reascending his ancestral throne and commencing anew a reign of justice, piety and happiness. The story is full of interest and variety, pure in tone, rich in imagery, and delicate in sentiment.

Inception of the Drama.

The Hindoo writers ascribe the invention of dramatic entertainments to an inspired sage, Bharata, or to the communications made to him by the god, Brahma himself, concerning an art gathered from the Vedas. As the

word Bharata, however, signifies an actor, it is probably a mere personification of the origin of the drama. Three kinds of entertainments, of which the natya, defined as a dance combined with gesticulation and speech, comes nearest to the drama, were said to have been exhibited before the gods by the spirits and nymphs of India's heaven, and to these the god Siva added two new styles of dancing.

The inception of the drama was thus doubtless of a religious character; it sprang from the union of song and dance in the festivals of the gods, to which were afterward added narrative recitation and dialogue, first sung, then spoken. Such scenes and stories from the mythology of Vishnu are still occasionally enacted in pantomime or spoken dialogue in India; and the most ancient Hindoo play is said to have treated an episode from the history of that deity, the choice of him as a consort by Laxmi—a favorite kind of subject in the Hindoo drama. The tradition connecting its earliest themes with the native mythology of Vishnu agrees with that ascribing the origin of a particular kind of performance—the *Sangita*—to Krishna and the shepherdesses. The author's later poem, the *Gitagovinda*, has been conjectured as suggestive of the earliest species of Hindoo dramas. But while the epic poetry of the Hindoos gradually approached the dramatic in the way of dialogue, their drama developed itself independently out of the union of the lyric and epic forms. Their dramatic poetry arose later than their great epic works, the *Maha-Bharata* and the *Ramayana*, which had again been long preceded by the hymnody of the Vedas. The beginning of

Indian drama may accordingly belong to the third century B. C., though we know it only from a later date. But by the time it produced the first specimens with which we are acquainted it had already reached its zenith, and it was therefore looked upon as having sprung into being as a perfect art. We know it only in its glory, its decline and its decay.

Periods of the Hindoo Drama.

The history of Hindoo dramatic literature may be roughly divided into the following periods:

I. From the first century B. C. to the tenth century A. D.—This period belongs to the pre-Mahometan age of Indian history, but to the division of it in which Buddhism has already become a powerful factor in the social, as well as in the moral and intellectual life of the land. It is the classical era of the Hindoo drama, and includes the works of its two indisputably greatest masters. Of these Kalidasa was by far the earlier, living at the court of King Vikramaditya of Avanti, and being accounted the brightest of its "nine gems" of genius. He is the author of *Sakuntala*—the work which, translated by Sir William Jones, first revealed to the western world of letters the existence of a Hindoo drama. It is a love-idyll of surpassing beauty, and, in the opinion of the highest authorities, one of the masterpieces of the poetic literature of the world. Kalidasa's other drama, *Vikrama and Urvasi*, or *The Hero and the Nymph*, though inferior as a whole to *Sakuntala*, contains one act of incomparable loveliness; and its enduring effect

upon Indian dramatic literature is shown by the imitations of it in later plays. To Kalidasa has likewise been attributed a third play,—the *Malavikagnimitra*—but it is doubtful whether this comedy, though held to be of ancient date, was not composed by another poet of the same name.

Another work of high merit, the pathetic *Mrichchhakati*, or *The Toy-Cart*, a domestic drama with a public underplot, may possibly belong to the close of the second Christian century, and seems certainly of an earlier date than the tenth. It is attributed, as is not uncommon with Indian plays, to a royal author named Sudraka.

The palm of preëminence is disputed with Kalidasa by the great dramatic poet Babhavuti—called also Crikantha, or he in whose throat is fortune—who flourished in the earlier part of the eighth century. While he is considered more artificial in language than his rival, and in general more bound by rules, he can hardly be deemed his inferior in dramatic genius. Of his three extant plays, *Mahavara-Charitra* and *Uttara-Rama-Charitra* are heroic dramas concerned with the adventures of Rama, the seventh incarnation of Vishnu; the third, the powerful *Malati and Madhava*, has love for its theme, and has been called the *Romeo and Juliet* of the Hindoos. It is considered by their critical authorities the best example of the drama of domestic life.

Among the remaining chief works of Indian dramatic literature the *Veni-Samhara* is thought probably to date from about the eighth or ninth century, its author's

name being doubtful. The play is described as one in which both pathos and horror are exaggerated, the violence of its action recalling the manner of Shakespeare's predecessors. The next series of plays forms a transition between the first era of Hindoo dramatic literature and the period of decline.

Decline of the Drama.

II. The decadence of the drama lasted from about the eleventh to the fourteenth century of our era, the beginning roughly coinciding with that of a continuous series of Mahometan invasions of India. *Hanuman-Nataka*, or *The Great Nataka*—for this play, the work of several hands, surpasses all others in length, extending over fourteen acts—dates from the tenth or eleventh century. Its story is taken from the Rama cycle, and a prominent character in it is the mythical monkey-chief Hanuman, to whom, indeed, tradition ascribed the original authorship of the play. Krishnamicra's "theosophic mystery," as it has been called, is ascribed by one authority to the middle of the eleventh century, by another to about the end of the twelfth. The dates of the famous *Ratnavali*, or *The Necklace*, a court-comedy of love and intrigue, with a half Terentian plot, and of the interesting Buddhist drama *Nagananda*, which begins as an erotic play, but passes into a most impressive exemplification of the supreme virtue of self-sacrifice, depend on the disputed question of their respective authorship. One of them belongs to the first quarter of the twelfth century, the other to an earlier time. Finally, Visak-

hadatta's interesting drama of political intrigue, *The Signet of the Minister*, in which Prince Chandragupta, presumably identifiable with the Sandrocottus, who is mentioned by ancient Greek historians, makes his appearance, was probably composed later than the end of the twelfth century. This is the only Indian play known to us with an essentially historical fable—a noteworthy circumstance, if, as is most probable, it was produced at a time when the Mahometan invasions had already begun.

The remaining plays of which it has been possible to conjecture the dates range in the time of their composition from the end of the eleventh to the fourteenth century. Of this period, as compared with the first, the general characteristic seems to be an undue preponderance of narrative and description, and an affected and over-elaborated style. As a striking instance of this class is mentioned a play on the adventures of Rama, which in spite, or by reason, of the commonplace character of its sentiments, the extravagance of its diction and the obscurity of its mythology, is stated to enjoy a higher reputation with the pundits of the present age than the masterpieces of Kalidasa and Babhavuti. To the close of this period has likewise been ascribed the only Tamil drama of which we possess an English version. *Arichandra*, or *The Martyr of Truth*, exemplifies—with a strange likeness in plot to the *Book of Job* and *Faust*—in the trials of a heroically enduring king, the maxim "Better die than lie."

Isolated plays remain from centuries later than the fourteenth, but these, which chiefly turn on the legends

of Krishna, the last incarnation of Vishnu, may be regarded as a mere after-growth, and exhibit the Indian drama in its decay. Indeed, the latest of them, *Chitra-Yajna*, which was composed about the beginning of the nineteenth century, and still serves as a model for Bengali dramatic performances, is imperfect in its dialogue, which is left for the actors to supplement. Besides these there are farces or farcical entertainments, more or less indelicate and of uncertain dates.

The number of plays which have come down to us from so vast an expanse of time is both relatively and absolutely small. Wilson doubts whether all the plays to be found, and those mentioned by Hindoo writers on the drama, amount to more than sixty, and it has been seen that not more than three are ascribed to either of the two great masters. To these should be added, however, the plays in Tamil, stated to be about a hundred in number, and to have been composed by poets who enjoyed the patronage of the Pandian kings of Madura.

The Hindoos have abundance of dramatic theory. The sage Bharata, the reputed inventor of dramatic entertainments, was likewise revered as the father of dramatic criticism. The commentators constantly cite his sutras or aphorisms. By the eleventh century, when the drama was already approaching its decline, dramatic criticism had reached an advanced point, and the *Dasa Rupaka* distinctly defines the several kinds of dramatic composition. Other critical works followed at later dates, exhibiting a rage for subdivision unsurpassed by the efforts of Western theorists, ancient or modern; the misfortune is that few examples of such works remain.

"What," inquires the manager of an actor in the induction to one of the most famous of Indian plays, "are those qualities which the virtuous, the wise, the venerable, the learned and the Brahmans require in a drama?" "Profound exposition of the various passions," is the reply, "pleasing interchange of mutual affection, loftiness of character, delicate expression of desire, a surprising story and elegant language." "Then," says the manager, "I recollect one." And he proceeds to state that "Babhavuti has given us a drama composed by him, replete with all qualities, to which indeed this sentence is applicable: 'How little do they know who speak of us with censure! This entertainment is not for them. Possibly some one exists, or will exist, of similar tastes with myself; for time is boundless and the world is wide.'" This self-possessed disregard of popularity, springing from an imperturbable consciousness of lofty aims, accounts for much that is characteristic of the higher class of Hindoo plays. It explains both their paucity and their length, renders intelligible the chief peculiarity in their diction, and furnishes the key to their most striking ethical as well as literary qualities.

Sanskrit Dramas.

The Hindoo drama is distinguished from every other by a most remarkable peculiarity; it is not in the vernacular tongue! The greater part of every play—and almost all the finest—is written in Sanskrit; but Sanskrit, though once a spoken tongue in some parts of India, was never the language of the whole country, and

had ceased to be a living dialect at a period of which we have no knowledge. The plays, therefore, were unintelligible to a great—perhaps the greater—part of the audience. This must have somewhat impaired the pleasure of the spectators. The explanation of this peculiarity is to be found in the constitution of Hindoo society—not only the highest offices of the state, but the highest branches of literature, being reserved for the privileged Brahmans. As Wilson says, but a small portion could have followed the expressions of the actors so as to have felt their full force, and the plays of the Hindoos must therefore have been exceedingly deficient in theatrical effect.

Audiences.

Yet there were circumstances attending these representations that in some measure compensated the evil of their being unintelligible; most of the stories on which the plays were founded were popular; there was a sanctity in Sanskrit, and indeed in the whole performance, that "substituted an adventitious interest for ordinary excitement." People went prepared to be interested, and with a religious temper of awe and reverence; the spectacle before their eyes must have awakened their imaginations, and there is no setting bounds to the effect that may be produced on feelings willing and ready to be roused by the power of good acting and of stirring scenery, especially if it represent objects and events consecrated by superstition. These dramas, too, were not every-day entertainments. Like those of the

Athenians they were written with a view but to one specific representation, and were acted only on solemn or public occasions—such as lunar holidays, a royal coronation, assemblages of people at fairs and religious festivals, marriages, the meeting of friends, taking first possession of a house or a town, and the birth of a son. The most ordinary occasion, however, of a performance was the season peculiarly sacred to some divinity. When all these things are taken into account, the peculiarity no longer seems a mystery, and we can easily enough imagine how, with the sympathy of the Sanskrit scholars, who understood and felt all that was uttered, may have blended that of the many who knew but their vernacular, till the whole congregation was moved; for the sounds, of which the ignorant part of the audience knew not the precise significance, would operate upon their feelings like those of natural language; so that we seem to have brought ourselves to the admission of an important truth, that the unintelligible may be extremely affecting or exciting, and a play most delightful, of which not one word in ten is understood, except from the tones and gesticulations of the actors.

Subjects of the Drama.

In other respects, besides its sacred character, the Hindoo drama resembled that of the Greeks. It never entirely renounced its original elements of music and dancing, though, as at Athens, the dancing, which was at first the whole of the mute and imitative exhibition, was retired into the interlude, or refined into appropriate

gesticulation, and the music, in like manner, receded into a subordinate position, either as an accompaniment to lyric songs or to fill the intervals between the acts. The ballet, or pantomime, however, continued to exist as a separate spectacle, and in many provinces a species of burlesque, consisting of buffoonery and comic songs, representing the deeds of Rama or Krishna, and closely akin to the satyric drama of the Greeks, is still extremely popular.

Almost every species of drama known to the Western world has also its counterpart in India, and if, as is stated, the extant plays do not exceed threescore, they make up in variety for what they lack in number. They have been classed, moreover, with all the minuteness of Polonius, except that tragedy, with her bowl and dagger, may not tread the Hindoo stage, for this gentle people will not endure the sight of blood. Their critics know no distinction directly corresponding to that between tragedy and comedy, their plays confine themselves "neither to the crimes nor to the absurdities of mankind; neither to the momentous changes nor lighter vicissitudes of life; neither to the terrors of distress nor the gaieties of prosperity." In truth, the individual and social organization of society is unfavorable to the development of violent emotion. In accordance with the child-like element in their character, they dislike an unhappy ending to any story, and a positive rule accordingly prohibits a fatal conclusion. The general term for all dramatic compositions is *rupaka*, from *rupa*, form. Of the various subdivisions of the rupaka, in a limited sense, the nataka, or play proper, represents the most

perfect kind. Its subject should always be celebrated and important—either heroism or love, and most frequently the latter—and the hero should be a demigod or divinity, or a king. But although the earlier dramatists took their plots from the sacred writings or *Puranas*, they held themselves at liberty to vary the incidents—a license from which the later poets abstained. Thus, in accordance perhaps with the respective developments in the religious life of the two peoples, the Hindoo drama in this respect reversed the progressive practice of the Greek. The *prakaranas* agree in all essentials with the *natakas*, except that they are less elevated; their stories are mere fictions taken from actual life in a respectable class of society. Among the species of the uparupakas may be mentioned the trotaka, in which the personages are partly human, partly divine, as in a famous example that has come down to us. Of the bhana, a monologue in one act, one literary example is extant—a curious picture of manners in which the speaker describes the different persons he meets at a spring festival in the streets of Kolahalapur. The satire of the farcical prahasanas is usually directed against the hypocrisy of ascetics and Brahmans, and the sensuality of the wealthy and powerful. These trifles represent the lower extreme of the dramatic scale, to which, of course, the principles that follow only partially apply.

Regulations.

Unity of action is strictly enjoined by Hindoo theory, though not invariably observed in practice. Episodical

or prolix interruptions are forbidden, but in order to facilitate the connection the story of the play is sometimes carried on by narratives spoken by actors or "interpreters." Unity of time is liberally, if rather arbitrarily, understood by the later critical authorities as limiting the duration of the action to a single year, but even this is exceeded in more than one classical play. The single acts are to confine the events occurring in them to "one course of the sun," and usually do so. Unity of place is unknown to the Hindoo drama, by reason of the absence of scenery, for the plays were performed in the open courts of palaces, perhaps at times in large halls set apart for public entertainments, or in the open air. Hence change of scene is usually indicated in the text, and we find the characters making long journeys on the stage under the eyes of the spectators.

With the solemn character of the higher kind of dramatic performances accord the rules and prohibitions defining what may be called the proprieties of the Hindoo drama. Not only should death never be inflicted, but the various operations of biting, scratching, kissing, eating, sleeping and the marriage ceremony should never take place on the stage. Yet such rules are made to be occasionally broken. It is true that the mild humor of the vidus shaka is restricted to his "gesticulative eating" instead of perpetrating the obnoxious act. The charming love scene in the *Sakuntala* breaks off just as the hero is about to act the part of the bee to the honey of the heroine's lips. But later writers are less squeamish or less refined. In two dramas the heroine is dragged on the stage by her braid of hair. In a

third, sleeping and the marriage ceremony occur in the course of the representation.

The dramatic construction of the Indian plays presents no very striking peculiarities. They open with a benediction, followed by some account of the author, and by an introductory scene between the manager and one of the actors, which is more or less skillfully connected with the opening of the play itself. This is divided into acts and scenes; of the former a nataka should have not fewer than five, nor more than ten, but the great nataka reaches fourteen. Thus the length of the higher class of plays is about that of an Æschylean trilogy; but not more than a single play was ever performed on the same occasion. Comic plays are restricted to two acts. In theory the scheme of a Hindoo drama corresponds very closely to the general outline of dramatic construction given above; it is a characteristic merit that the business is rarely concluded before the last act. The piece closes as it began, with a benediction or prayer. Within this framework room is found for situations as ingeniously devised and highly wrought as those in any modern Western play. What, for instance, could be more pitiful than the scene in *Sakuntala*, where the true wife appears before her husband, whose remembrance of her is fatally overclouded by a charm; what more terrific than that in *Malati and Madhava*, where the lover rescues his beloved from the horrors of the charnal-field? Recognition—especially between parents and children—frequently gives rise to scenes of pathos which Euripides has not surpassed. The ingenious device of a play within a play is em-

ployed with the utmost success by Babhavuti. On the other hand, miraculous metamorphosis and, in a later play, vulgar magic lend their aid to the progress of the action. With scenes of strong effectiveness contrast others of the most delicate poetic grace—such as the indescribably beautiful episode of the two damsels of the god of love helping one another to pluck the red and green bud from the mango tree; or of a domestic pathos—such as that of the courtesan listening to the prattle of her lover's child, one of the prettiest scenes of a kind rarely kept free from affectation in the modern drama. For the dénouement, in the narrower sense of the term, dramatists largely resort to the expedient of the deux ex machina, often in a sufficiently literal sense.

Personages.

Every species of drama having its appropriate kind of hero or heroine theory here again amuses itself with an infinitude of subdivisions. Among the heroines are to be noticed the courtesans, whose social position to some extent resembles that of the Greek hetæræ, and association with whom does not seem in practice, however it may be in theory, to be regarded as a disgrace even to Brahmans. In general the drama indicates relations between the sexes subject to peculiar restraints of usage, but freer than those which Mahometan example seems to have introduced into higher society. The male characters are frequently drawn with skill and sometimes with genuine force. Prince Samsthanaka is a type of selfishness born in the purple, worthy

to rank beside figures of the modern drama, of which this has at times naturally been a favorite class of character; elsewhere the intrigues of ministers are not more fully exposed than their characters and principles of action are judiciously discriminated. Among the lesser personages common in the Hindoo drama, two are worth noticing, as corresponding, though by no means precisely, to familiar types of other dramatic literatures. These are the vita, the accomplished but dependent companion, and the vidushaka, the humble associate of the prince and the buffoon of the action. Strangely enough, he is always a Brahman, or the pupil of a Brahman. His humor is to be ever intent on the pleasures of a quiet life, and, in particular, on eating.

Thus, clothing itself in a diction always ornate and tropical, in which the prose is the warp and the verse the weft; in which words become allusions, allusions similes, and similes metaphors, the Indian drama essentially depended upon its literary qualities, and upon the familiar sanctity of its favorite themes, for such effect as it was able to produce. Of scenic apparatus it knew but little; exits and entrances were regulated in the simplest fashion, and the contrivances resorted to for "properties" required no skill. Propriety of costume, on the other hand, seems always to have been observed, agreeably both to the peculiarities of the drama and to the habits of the people.

The ministers of an art practised under such conditions could not but be regarded with respect, and spared the contempt, or worse, which, except among one other great civilized people, the Greeks, has everywhere at

one time or another been the actor's lot. Companies of actors seem to have been common in India at an early date, and the indications show the players to have been regarded as respectable members of society. In later, if not in earlier times, individual actors enjoyed a widespread reputation, or, as is stated in the inductions, are known to "all the world." Female parts were in general, though not invariably, represented by females. One would like to know whether such was the case in a piece where a crafty minister passes off his daughter as a boy, on which assumption she is all but married to a person of her own sex.

Excellencies and Defects.

The Indian drama as literature rivals all except the very foremost dramas of the world. It would be absolutely misleading to place a dramatic literature, which is the mere quintessence of the culture of a caste, by the side of one which represents the fullest development of the artistic consciousness of a people such as the Greeks. The Indian drama cannot be described as national in the broadest and highest sense of the word; it is, in short, the drama of a literary class, though as such it exhibits many of the noblest and most refined, as well as the most characteristic features of Hindoo religion and civilization. The ethics of this drama are of a lofty character, but they are those of a scholastic system of religious philosophy, self-conscious of its completeness. To the power of fate is occasionally ascribed a supremacy to which gods as well as mortals must bow;

but if man's present life is merely a phase in the cycle of his destinies, the highest of moral efforts at the same time points to the summit of possibilities, and self-sacrifice is the supreme condition both of individual perfection and of the progress of the world. Such conceptions as these seem at once to enfold and to overshadow the moral life of the Hindoo drama. The affections and passions forming part of self it delineates with a fidelity to nature which no art can neglect; but the freedom of the picture is restricted by conditions which to us are unfamiliar and at times seem intolerable, yet which it was impossible for the poet's imagination to neglect. The sheer self-absorption of ambition or love appears inconceivable to the minds of any of these poets, and their social philosophy is always based on the system of caste. On the other hand, they are masters of many of the truest forms of pathos, above all that which blends with resignation. In humor of a delicate kind they are by no means deficient; to its lower forms they are generally strangers, even in productions of a professedly comic intention. Though a play on words is as the breath of the nostrils, their dramatic literature furnishes hardly any examples of wit, intelligible to Western notions.

The distinctive excellence of the Indian drama is to be sought in the poetic robe which envelops it as flowers overspread the bosom of the earth in the season of spring. In its nobler productions, at least, it is never untrue to its half religious, half rural origin; it weaves the wreaths of idyllic fancies in an unbroken chain, adding to its favorite and familiar blossoms ever fresh

beauties from an inexhaustible garden. Nor is it unequal to depicting the grander aspects of nature in her mighty forests and on the shores of ocean. A profound familiarity with its native literature can alone follow its diction through an easy flow of phrase and figure, listen with understanding to the hum of the bee as it hangs over the lotus, and contemplates with Sakuntala's pious sympathy the creeper as it winds round the mango tree. But the poetic beauty of the Hindoo drama reveals itself in the mysterious charm of its outline, if not in its full glow, even to the untrained; and the study of it should attract the lover of literature.

V.

A Romantic Hindoo Drama.

As a specimen of the romantic drama may be outlined the *Vikrama and Urvasi*, or *The Hero and the Nymph*, Kalidasa's masterpiece, which relates the loves of Pururavas and Urvasi, an oft-told tale, but never presented in such interesting form as in the play of the great Hindoo dramatist. Pururavas is the king of Partishthana, and Urvasi is an apsarasa or nymph of Indra's heaven. The scene in the first act is the peaks of the Himalaya; in the second and third, the palace of Pururavas at Partishthana; in the fourth, the forest of Akalusha, and in the fifth, again at the palace. During the prelude, shrieks are heard in the air.

> **Help, help, if in the middle sky**
> **A friend be found, to aid us fly!**

In the first scene enter in the air a troop of apsarasas, still shrieking for help, and then Pururavas, in a heavenly car, driven by his charioteer. He is a king of high descent, being sprung by his mother, Ila, from the sun, and by his father, Buddha, from the moon.

Pur.—Suspend your cries; in me behold a friend,
Pururavas, returning from the sphere
Of the wide-glancing sun; command my aid, and tell
me what you dread.

Rembha (a nymph).—A demon's violence.

Pur.—What violence presumes the fiend to offer?

Menaka.—Great King! it thus has chanced; we measured
back
Our steps from an assembly of the gods
Held in Kuvera's hall—before us stepped
The graceful Urvasi, the nymph whose charms
Defeated Indra's stratagems, and shamed
The loveliness of Sri—the brightest ornament
Of heaven; when on our path the haughty Danava,
Kesi, the monarch of the Golden city,
Sprang fierce and tore the struggling nymph away.

Pururavas orders his charioteer to drive him up the mountains and through the clouds in pursuit of the ravisher, while the nymphs await his return with the rescued Urvasi, on the Golden or Snowy peak. In a few moments—for his speed has been as of the lightning—the king reënters his car slowly; Urvasi fainting near his side, supported by her friend Chitralekha.

Pur.—Why cherish this alarm
When its just cause is o'er?
Unclose those lids,
The lotus opens when the night retires.

Chitra.—Alas! her sighs alone declare her conscious!

Pur.—Soft as the flower, the timid heart not soon
Foregoes its fears—the scarf that veils her bosom
Hides not its flutterings, and the panting breast
Seems as if it felt the wreath of heavenly blossoms
Weigh too oppressively.

Chitra.—Revive, my friend!

This weakness ill becomes a nymph of Heaven!
Awake, dear friend! the enemies of Heaven
Are baffled in despair.

Urv.—(Reviving.) By Indra's prowess.

Chitra.—By prowess not inferior to Mahendra's;
By this most holy prince, Pururavas.

Urv.—(Looking at Pururavas; then aside.)
What thanks I owe the Danava!

Both are smitten. The king is particularly poetical, and the nymph says apart that his delightful words fall like drops of nectar. He tells her that her attendants are watching anxiously on the Golden peak to mark her coming safe from the Demon's grasp: "Like the bright moon emerging from eclipse."

Rembha.—Attended by each brilliant star,
Like Chandra in his radiant car,
The king appears, and with him borne,
Behold our sister nymphs return.

Menaka.—For both the boons our thanks be poured;
The prince returned, and friends restored.

Chorus.—Joy to the prince who mighty rose
To quell the pride of demon foes.

Pur.—To yonder lofty mountain guide the car.
(Aside.) Not vain our journey hitherward; 'tis much,
In the unsteady rolling of the chariot,
But for a moment to have touched the form
Of this celestial nymph—the blissful contact
Shoots ecstasy through every fibre. Here (aloud)
Arrest our course—the maid's companion choir
Press on to her embrace, like flowery vines
That bend to catch the beauty of the spring.

In the midst of their congratulations, the sound of mighty chariots is heard—a blaze plays on the towering precipices and enter Chitraratha, the king of the Gandharbas, the male attendants and choristers in the courts of Siva, Indra and Kuvera. He had been sent by Indra to rescue Urvasi from the demon, but having been too late, had returned to the court and now bears Indra's thanks and his wish to see the victorious prince in heaven. All this has happened in shorter time than has been required to write it. After some coy, reluctant, amorous delay, for she has entangled her garland in a struggling vine, and suffers Chitralekha leisurely to disengage it, Urvasi at last ascends after the upward flight of the Gandharbas and Apsarasas, while Pururavas, gazing after her and exclaiming "what idle dreams does frantic love suggest!" mounts his car and disappears.

In Act II the scene is in the garden of the palace of Pururavas at Prayaga, at the confluence of the Yamuna and the Ganges. Enter Manava and the Vidushaka, or buffoon.

Man.—It is mighty inconvenient for a Brahman like myself, one so much sought after and subject to much invitation, to be burdened with the king's secret—going so much into company as I do. I shall never be able to set a guard on my tongue. I must be prudent, and will stay here by myself in this retired temple, until my royal friend comes forth from the council chamber. (Sits down and covers his face with his hands.)

Nipunika, an attendant on the queen, steals upon him, soliloquizing about the king, who, she says, is quite

an altered man since he returned from the regions of the Sun, and she wonders what can be the reason. She is not long in learning this from the Vidushaka, is delighted to find there is a nymph in the case, and runs off to comfort the queen with the welcome intelligence. Her place is supplied by no less a personage than Pururavas himself, and an amusing dialogue ensues between him and the Vidushaka about Urvasi. The king is so lost in his passion as to be insensible to the buffoonery of the privileged Brahman, and preserves a most solemn aspect, which contrasts strongly with the mock-majesty of the jester.

Man.—The bower of jasmines yonder is studded thick with blossoms, and the bees crowd about them in heaps; it invites your majesty to repose. (They enter the arbor.)

Pur.—As you please.

Man.—Now, seated in this shade, you may dissipate your cares by contemplating the elegant plants around us.

Pur.—How should I learn composure? As my eye rests on the towering trees, and from their tops sees the lithe creeper wave, I call to mind

The graces that surpass its pendulous elegance.
Come, rouse your wit, and friendship may inspire
Some capable expedient to secure me
The object of my wishes—

Man.—With all my heart. The thunderbolt was Indra's friend, when he was in love with Ahalya, and I am your adviser, now you are enamoured of Urvasi. We are both of us sapient counsellors.

Pur.—Genuine affection ever counsels wisely.

Man.—Well, I will turn the matter over in my mind, but you must not disturb my cogitations by your sighs.

Pur.—(Feeling his eyes twinkle.)

The moon-faced maid is far beyond my reach!

Then why should love inspire such flattering tokens?
They teach my mind to feel as if, enjoyed
The present bliss, hope scarcely dares imagine.

As he ceases speaking, Urvasi and Chitralekha hover over him in the air. Their colloquy is all of love, and her attendant encourages the nymph to believe that her charms must be victorious. They descend, but conceal themselves in veiling mist—that, lurking unseen, they may overhear what thoughts the king utters in the solitude of the arbor. Then Manava asks his majesty if he heard him observe that he had devised an expedient for securing an interview with his heavenly charmer? Pururavas replies, "Say on—what is it?" And the Vidushaka, looking very wise, continues, "This it is. Let your majesty cherish a comfortable nap, your union will then be affected by your dreams; or delineate a portrait of the lady Urvasi and recreate your imagination by gazing on her picture." Urvasi is delighted to find Pururavas so enamored of her, and pulling a leaf, she writes upon it and lets it fall—herself still invisible—near the Vidushaka, who picks it up, and intuitively knowing that it could come from nobody but Urvasi, hands it to the king, who exclaims: "Hope dawns upon my passion! Your guess was right." He then reads aloud—

Not undeserved, although unknown, the flame
That glows with equal fires in either frame.
The breeze that softly floats through heavenly bowers,
Reclined upon my couch of coral flowers,
Sheds not on me its cool reviving breath
But blows the hot and scorching gale of death:

O'er all my form the feverish venom flies,
And each bright bud beneath me droops and dies.

Urvasi now bids Chitralekha reveal herself, not having yet summoned up courage to do so herself; and that nymph finding the king in transports, calls upon his paramour, and she appears before him in all her charms.

Urv.—Triumph to the king.

Pur.—The wish is victory,
When from the sovereign of the gods transferred
By lips celestial to a mortal monarch.
(Takes her hand and leads her to a seat.)

Man.—Fair lady! I am a Brahman of the king, and his friend, and so may claim some notice. (Urvasi bows to him, smiling.) Prosperity attend you.

(A messenger of the gods in the air.)

Mess.—Ho! Chitralekha—Urvasi, repair
Swift to the palace of the Lord of Air
There your appointed duties to fulfill,
And give expression to the wondrous skill
Of Bharata, your master—to the dome
Divine the world's protecting rulers come,
Eager to view the scene that genius fires,
That passion animates, and truth inspires.

A drama by Bharata, the Muni, is about to be acted in the palace of the Lord of the Air, and Urvasi is to appear in the principal female part—to star it in the private theatre of the god. The nymphs obey the mandate, and Pururavas exclaims, "She disappears!" The Vidushaka meanwhile has been so fascinated that he has unconsciously let the leaf with the billet upon it

slip out of his hands, and the pair look for it in vain all around the arbor.

Pur.—The sighs that heaved
Her panting bosoms, as she hence departed,
Exhaled her heart, and lodged it in my bosom;
Free to dispose of it, although her person
Be forced to wait upon a master's will.

They retire, and Ausinari, the queen, with Nipunika and attendants enter on the foreground. The queen suspects that something had been happening that is not quite right, and as bad luck would have it, she sees the leaf! Nipunika picks it up, and the cat is let out of the bag. The queen merely says, "We shall confound our nymph-enamored swain." They go around the arbor, and as if playing hide-and-seek, the king and Manava advance, his enamored majesty exclaiming:

Breeze of the South! the friend of Love and Spring,
Though from the flower you steal the fragrant down
To scatter perfume—yet why plunder me
Of those dear characters her own fair hand,
In proof of her affection, traced? Thou knowest
The lonely lover that in absence pines
Living on such fond memorials—it is not
Thy wont to disregard a lover's suit.
(Ausinari and her train advance.)

Ausi.—Nay, my good lord,
I pray you, be consoled, if, as I deem,
The loss of this occasions your distress.
(Offering the leaf.)

Pururavas has not a word to say for himself, and the Vidushaka makes bad worse by saying to the queen:

"Your grace had better order dinner—that will be the most effectual remedy for his majesty's bile.

Pur.—Peace, blockhead, you but heighten my offence.

He then flings himself at Ausinari's feet, and hopes to carry her pardon by a coup-de-main; but in vain.

Ausi.—Think me not
So mere a child—that this assumed respect
Beguiles me of my wrath—Away with it—
'Tis gross, my lord, and sits but ill upon you.
I treat such hypocritical penitence
As it deserves. (Spurns him, and exit.)

Man.—Her majesty has gone off in a hurry, like a river in the rains. You may rise. (To the king who has continued prostrate.)

Pur.—(Rising.) I might have spared myself the pains.
A woman is clear-sighted, and mere words
Touch not her heart.

The first scene of Act III is in the hermitage of Bharata, the Muni, inventor of the drama. From the conversation of two of his disciples we find that Urvasi had broken down in her part in the play in Makendra's palace. Never was there such a failure. The play was *Lakshmi's Choice of a Lord*, and Urvasi enacted Lakshmi. In the Hindoo society of former times it was common for princesses and women of rank to select a husband for themselves. The candidates for the hand of the lady were invited to her father's house, and after previous festivities for some days, were collected in the hall, round which the damsel passed, and chose her future lord by throwing a garland round his neck. In the play Menaka was Varuni, and on saying—

Lakshmi!—the mighty powers that rule the spheres
Are all assembled; at their head appears
The blooming Kesva: Confess—to whom inclines your heart—

Her reply should have been "to Puru-shotiama," but instead of that she stammered "Puru-ravas!" The sage, incensed, immediately pronounced a curse "that as she had forgotten her part, so should she be forgotten in heaven." But Indra, seeing her ashamed and disconsolate, and remembering the effectual aid Pururavas had lent him in conflict with the enemies of the gods, changed the curse into a blessing. The anger of the seer had banished her from heaven, but she might spend her term of exile with the monarch—the period of her banishment to expire when the king shall behold the offspring she shall bear him.

Scene II is in part of the gardens of the palace, and Pururavas and Vidushaka, with female attendants, enter, bearing torches. The king can think but of Urvasi. He sees not the steps of crystal—he hears not the Vidushaka praise the amazing beauty of the pavilion of gems. The moon is about to rise, and Pururavas begins to be at once musical and melancholy as he composes verses on her orb, but the buffoon cuts him short, by describing the ascent of the planet in his own way.

Man.—Ho! here he comes, the king of the Brahmans, as beautiful as a ball of almonds and sugar.

Pur.—O base similitude!

Man.—Enough, sir; your grandfather, without whose consent we Brahmans can do nothing, bids you sit, that he may repose himself.

Pur.—The splendor of the moon is light enough—
Remove the torches, and command my train
Retire to rest.

Love is all the theme in the imperial moonlit gardens; when, lo! Urvasi and Chitralekha in their car, hanging over the mirror of the Ganges, but to them invisible. Urvasi is in the purple dress, with pearl ornaments, "the garb of a woman who goes to meet her lover." After some tender talk, they descend, leave the car and proceed toward the pavilion of gems. Urvasi overhears Pururavas giving vent to his passion in poetry, and hastily advancing, she says:

I need no more concealment. Woe is me!
He deigns not to regard me!

Chitr.—In your haste,
You have forgotten to put off the veil
That screens you from his sight.
(Behind.) This way—this way, your grace.

(All listen. Urvasi throws herself into the arms of Chitralekha.)

Man.—The queen is here—we had better be mute.

Pur.—Assume the semblance of indifference.

Urv.—(To Chitr.) What shall we do?

Chitr.—Remain invisible.

The queen appears with attendants bearing offerings, herself dressed all in white—flowers her only other ornament. A change has come over the spirit of her dream. She is all meekness, and gazing on the moon exclaims—

This union with the constellation yields
New brilliance to the lord of Rohini.

Pururavas' self is softened, and seems as if his ancient flame were revived for the gentle Ausinari. Urvasi, in her invisibility, is touched, murmuring—

> She merits to be called divine! The bride
> Of Heaven's great King boasts not surpassing
> dignity.

The queen humbly tells his majesty that she has come to observe the Conciliation of Regard, and that she has made a vow to forego her ornaments, and to hold a rigid fast—including abstinence from conjugal endearments—until the moon enters a certain asterism. Pururavas is so charmed that Urvasi, in her turn, is jealous, exclaiming scornfully, "He pays her mighty deference!" Ausinari goes through the usual form of presenting the oblation of fruits, perfumes and flowers, and then asking leave to pay her homage, bows and falls at the feet of her lord and king. She then rises, and breathes a benediction.

> Resplendent pair! who o'er the night preside,
> Lord of the Deer-borne banneret, and thou
> His favorite, Rohini, hear and attest
> The sacred promise that I make my husband.
> Whatever nymph attract my lord's regard,
> And share with him the mutual bonds of love,
> I henceforth treat with kindness and complacency.
>
> *Urv.*—Oh! my dear friend, how much the words assuage
> The apprehensions of my heart!
>
> *Chitr.*—She is a lady.
> Of an exalted spirit, and a wife
> Of duty most exemplary—you now
> May rest assured, nothing will more impede
> Your union with your love.

Pururavas, wholly overcome by such proofs of affection, tries to persuade Ausinari that she has made him miserable by her vow, and beseeches her to revoke it.

> If you please, retain me as your slave.

She answers:

> Be what you list,
> My vow is plighted—nor in vain the rite.
> You must excuse me—I may not forego
> The duties I have solemnly incurred.

The forgiving and indulgent queen goes her ways, and Pururavas begins again to dream in the moonlight of the nymph of heaven. He dreams that she steals behind him and spreads a tender veil before his eyes. The utterance of the dream brings its accomplishment. Urvasi advances behind the king and covers his eyes with her hands.

Pur.—It must be Urvasi!
No other hand could shoot such ecstasy
Through this emaciate frame; the solar ray
Wakes not the night's fair blossom—that alone
Expands when conscious of the moon's dear presence.

Urv.—(Appearing.) Joy to the king!

Pur.—All hail, bright nymph of Heaven!
(Leads her to a seat.)

Chitr.—(Advancing.) Be the King blest.

Pur.—I feel I am already.

Urv.—Hear me, my friend. (To Chitralekha.) By virtue of the gift

Made of his royal person by the queen,
I boldly claim the king. Do you declare
If I am reprehensible.

All is rapture—all is bliss. His grandfather, the moon, smiles on Pururavas, and consecrates the espousals. Urvasi tenderly laments she "had caused her lord to suffer pain so long." He tenderly whispers, "Sweet the joy that follows grief." The Vidushakha is delighted.

Man.—Fate is propitious, and crowns your majesty's desires.

Pur.—'Tis true, I reach the height of my ambition.
The haughty canopy that spreads its shade
Of universal empire o'er the world;
The footstool of dominion set with gems,
Torn from the glittering brows of prostrate kings,
Are in my mind less glorious than to lie
At Urvasi's fair feet, and do her bidding.

The fourth act is one of the most beautiful of Oriental lyric poems. It is all in one strain—much of it sung, and the rest in recitative—by Pururavas in delirium. But there is method in his madness, and the prevailing link of association and suggestion is a fine and fair one —Urvasi, the Apsarasa, the Nymph of Heaven. Chitralekha tells her sister, Sahajanya, that while Pururavas and Urvasi were wandering in their bliss along the brink of the Mandakini, a nymph of air who was gamboling in the crystal wave, attracted the momentary glance of the monarch, and aroused the jealous wrath

of Urvasi. She disdainfully repelled her lord, and her mind becoming darkened by the curse of the seer, she heedlessly forgot the law that debars all female access to the hateful groves of Karlakeya, and entered the forbidden gloom. Instantly was she transferred to a slender vine, and there she pines till Fate shall set her free. Frantic with sorrow, the king is searching the woods for his lost bride; but never, says Chitralekha, can she be restored to his arms till Pururavas finds the ruby of reunion,

> The sacred gem that owes its ruby glow
> To the bright tint of Gauri's sacred feet.

Pururavas is seen rushing through a lonesome part of the forest of Akalusha, on the skirts of the Grandhamadana, one of the four boundary mountains enclosing the central region of the world called Ilavritta, in which is situated the golden mountain of the gods, or Meru. He is looking up to heaven—his dress disordered, and his general appearance indicative of insanity. His mind is in the past. He believes himself still in pursuit of the demon who is carrying off Urvasi; but it is no demon—only a cloud. He sees a lonely cygnet in the flood, and feels that for his sake drooping is the fair creature's snowy plumage and tears suffusing its eyes! He implores the skies to pity him—yet he "does not tax the elements with unkindness." All at once he remembers that he is a king. The peacock in its pride is the herald of his honors, the torrents flashing down the rocks praise him from tributary realms—but again he cries—

My sole sad business here
To thread the woods in search of my beloved!

The bright pendulous flowers, surcharged with dew, remind him of her eyes. The soil softened by showers may retain the delicate impression of her feet! Yon proud bird, perched on the jutting crag, with neck outstretched and spreading tail, to express his raptures to the clouds, may haply give him intelligence of his Urvasi.

Bird of the dark blue throat and eye of jet,
Oh, tell me, have you seen the lovely face
Of my fair bride, lost in this dreary wilderness?
Her charms deserve your gaze.

But he receives no reply; neither does he learn anything from the royal elephant, the swan, the mountain, of each of whom he inquires after Urvasi, finally turning to the antelope:

A nymph of heaven has left her sphere
To make a heavenly region here,
And treads this sacred ground.
Her slender waist, her swelling hips,
Her languid eyes, her ruby lips
With youth unfading crowned.
O, tell me, through the tangled maze,
If wondering she has met thy gaze,
Deer of the soft black eye—
Ere yet beneath the yawning brink
Of sorrow's gulf immersed I sink,
Befriend me, or I die.
Lord of the bounding herds, say hast thou seen
My fair, whose large and languid eyes resemble
Those of thy tender mate? He heeds me not—

But springs to meet his doe. Be happy both,
Though fate still adverse frown on my desires.

A stream of ruddy radiance now breaks through the cleft rock where he is standing. Is it fire? No flame could have survived the descending torrent. "Is it some sanguine fragment of the lion's feast?" No—'tis a gem! a gem more roseate than the blush of the asoka blossom, and fain would the sun grasp it with his beams. A voice in the air breathes, "Take up the gem, my son! The feet of Nema's holy daughter shed on it a wondrous virtue. Take up the gem, my son, and

The bride will be restored
To bless her sorrowing and lamented lord."

He obeys the voice.

Pur.—What means this strange emotion as I gaze
Upon this vine—no blossoms deck its boughs;
Nipped by the falling rains, like briny tears,
The buds have perished, and the mournful shrub
All unadorned appears to pine in absence;
No bees regale her with their songs—but silent
And sad, she lonely seems, just like the image
Of my repentant love, who now laments
Her causeless indignation—I will press
The melancholy likeness to my heart.

He embraces the vine, which is transformed to Urvasi.

Urv.—Glory to the king!
Let me implore
Forgiveness, that my causeless wrath has wrought
So sad a change in you!

Pururavas is now in full possession of all his soul and all his senses, and overwhelms her with his love.

Urv.—The king delights to flatter me; but now
Let us return to Pratishthana;
The city mourns its absent lord, and I,
The cause of his departure, shall incur
The angry censure of the people: come—
How will it please you travel?

Pur.—Yonder cloud
Shall be our downy car, to waft us swift
And lightly on our way—

Act V is in the palace of Pururavas. We hear the cry of "the ruby, the ruby!" A hawk, mistaking it for a piece of flesh, has borne it away from the plantain leaf, on which it was for a moment placed along with the lady's robes. The king and his queens had been performing their ablutions where the Yamuna meets the Ganges. Pururavas calls for his bow and arrows, but the hawk flies

Far to the south beyond the arrow's reach—
Red as asoka flowers, the precious gem
Graces the sky—with sullen fires it glows
Like angry Mars, bursting at intervals
Through the thick clouds that overhang the night.

But the chamberlain enters with an arrow and—the jewel! Characters are inscribed on the arrow, and Pururavas reads in perplexity and astonishment:

"The arrow of the all-subduing Ayus,
The son of Urvasi and Pururavas.

A female ascetic, Tapasi, enters, followed by a boy with a bow in his hand. The Vidushaka says to the king, "Your perfect image!" Tapasi tells him that the princely youth is indeed the son of Urvasi, and had been for some cause confided, without his father's knowledge, to her secret care. The pious Chyavana had taught him all knowledge worthy his martial birth,

> **And lastly trained his growing youth to arms.**

Her charge had expired—that day's achievement unfits him longer to remain an inmate of the peaceful hermitage. "Monarch, behold thy son!"

The prince advances and prostrates himself. Pururavas raises and embraces him, and places him on a footstool of his throne. Urvasi approaches.

> **What youth is this, who, in the royal presence,**
> **Armed with the bow and quiver, honoured sits**
> **Upon the golden footstool—while the king**
> **Is fondly playing with his twisted tresses.**
> **Ha! Satyavati, too! it is my son!**
> **His growth outstrips my memory.**

Ayus, at the command of Tapasi, rises and goes to his mother, who embraces him. All at once Urvasi begins weeping. "Why," fondly breathes Pururavas, "when now I contemplate with ecstasy the proud perpetuation of my race—oh, why

> **"Should these dear drops in swift succession spread**
> **A pearly fillet on thy heaving bosom!"**

"Alas! my lord," she says, in some such words as these, "happy a while in the sight of this dear boy, I had forgotten the dread decree of Swerga's king, that soon as Pururavas should see a child of ours, must Urvasi return to heaven! Therefore it was that I concealed his birth—that I intrusted him to yonder pious dame to convey him to Chyavana's retreat! Oh, must I indeed part from my lord, the king?"

Pururavas laments that he should have been restored from insanity to suffer even severer woe. He will not immerse himself in cares of state, for fear he might thus less feel the pangs of separation. Back to the deer-trod thickets will he go—and leave his son to wield the sceptre of the world. But the boy wishes he were back at the hermitage, with his favorite peacock. "All unfit," he says, "am I for such a burden."

Pur.—Fear it not.
The elephant cub soon tames the forest herds;
The snake scarce hatched concocts the deadly poison;
Kings are in boyhood monarchs, and endowed
With powers inborn to rule the race of men;
Nature, not age, gives fitness.
(To the chamberlain.)
Our ministers and priests be all prepared
For this our son's inauguration. Speed.

But it is an ancient and inviolable law of the Hindoo drama that happiness shall illumine the end. It may be "a tale of tears, a mournful story;" but, finally, the rain must be as dew, the clouds dispart and disappear, and all in heaven and on earth be sunshine. The Orientals knew the luxury of grief, but they loved not to be

sent "weeping to their beds." They clung not, like us of the western world, to agony; for their souls were not so strong as ours—nor of frame so sinewy. They acknowledged fate, but shunned its worst catastrophes.

Pur.—What sudden splendor breaks, whence are these
Flashes of lightning in a cloudless sky?

Urv.—'Tis Nareda.

Pur.—His braided curls are of a golden dye;
His sacred cord, bright as the silver moon:
Around his neck, are strings of heavy pearl:
Like a celestial tree with glittering stem
He moves: prepare we to receive him.

Urv.—Here,
This offering of respect, gathered in haste,
Present the sage.
(Gives the king some flowers—Nareda descends.)

Nar.—Triumph attend
The brave defender of this middle sphere.

Pur.—(Presenting the oblation.) Reverence to the sage.

Urv.—Accept my homage. (Bows.)

Nar.—Never be wife and husband disunited.

Pur.—(Aside.) Oh, might this be. (Aloud.) Advance, my son, and pay
Your adoration to the holy seer.

Ayus.—Ayus, the son of Urvasi, presumes
To pay you homage. (Bows to Nareda.)

Nar.—May your days be many—King attend;
The mighty Indra, to whom all is known,
By me thus intimates his high commands.
Forego your purpose of ascetic sorrow.
The sages, to whose wisdom past and future
Are as the present, have foretold at hand
Hostilities in heaven, and the gods will need
Your prowess—then relinquish not your arms;
And Urvasi shall be through life united
With thee in holy bonds.

Urv.—These happy words
Extract a barbed arrow from my bosom.

Pur.—Whatever Indra wills I shall obey.

Nar.—'Tis wisely said, he will not be unthankful.
The fiery element sustains the sun,
The sun returns his rays to nourish fire. (Looking upward.)
Rembha appear, and bring the holy wave
Consigned by Indra to your charge, to consecrate
The prince's elevation to the throne—
As partner of the empire.

(Rembha and other nymphs descend with a golden vase containing the water of the heavenly Ganges, a throne, and other paraphernalia, which they arrange.)

Rem.—All is prepared.

Nar.—Prince, to your seat.

(Nareda leads Ayus to the throne of inauguration, takes the golden ewer from Rembha, and pours water on the head of the prince.)
Rembha, complete the rite.

(Rembha and the Apsarasas perform the rest of the ceremony.)

Rem.—Now, prince, salute your parents and the sage.

(As Ayus bows to them respectively, they reply.)

Nar.—Unvarying fortune wait upon thy reign.

Pur.—My son, sustain the honors of your lineage.

Urv.—My son, be still obedient to thy sire.

Chorus of Bards without.

Glory, all glory, on Ayus attending,
Still in the son we the father may trace;
Justice and valor together extending
The sway of his sceptre and fame of his race—
Son of the monarch the universe filling,
Son of the god of the mist-shedding night,
Son of the sage, whom the great Brahma willing,
Called with creation to life and to light.

Second Chorus.

Long may the goddess of glory emblazon
The diadem raised by your father to fame,
Long may the world be delighted to gaze on
The fortune allied to your merit and name.
Long may the halo of Lakshmi clear glowing
Shoot round its splendors unclouded and wide;
Like Ganga from snow-crested pinnacles flowing
And rolling majestic to ocean's far tide.

Rem.—(To Urvasi.) No ordinary fate, dear sister, blesses you with such a son and lord.

Urv.—I own my happiness.
Come, my dear child, and offer to the queen,
Your elder mother, filial homage.

Pur.—Hold
One moment: we will presently together.

Nar.—The splendors of your son's inauguration
Bring to my memory the glorious time
When Mahasena was anointed chief
Of all the heavenly hosts

Pur.—To you I owe
Such honor.

Nar.—Is there aught else Indra can do
To serve his friend?

Pur.—To hold me in esteem
Is all I covet—yet haply may this chance—
May learning and prosperity oppose
No more each other, as their wont, as foes;
But in a friendly bond together twined
Ensure the real welfare of mankind.

The intercourse of heroes and goddesses is almost as old as literature itself. It is all one in the Sanskrit, the Greek and the Latin, and no other theme is more pregnant of poetry. Who will not sympathize with the transformation of Urvasi into a vine? She is a charm-

ing creature, and it would be hard to find in Hindoo literature, or, indeed, in any literature, a more beautiful character. Especially attractive does she appear when, in her purple dress, with pearl ornaments, "the garb of a woman who goes forth to meet her lover," she proceeds toward the pavilion of gems, where Pururavas is giving vent to his passion in poetry, while Ausinari, the queen, bestows her benediction on the resplendent pair. But the drama is full of splendor. How beautiful the grouping of the nymphs on the peaks of the Himalaya, and the descent of Nareda through the fields of ether! We shall not praise Pururavas; but Ayus is a fine boy, and his bearing worthy of a prince who is great grandson of the moon.

VI.

A Domestic Hindoo Drama.

Of the domestic drama, perhaps the finest specimen is the *Toy-Cart*, of which we have an excellent translation by Horace Hayman Wilson. It is from the original, as is said, of King Sudraka, who terminated a life of the highest political, literary, and religious achievement by entering the sacred fire, as did other sages of olden days. According to some authorities it belongs to the close of the second century of our era, while others assign to it an earlier date; but when and by whomsoever written, it contains a remarkable picture of Indian life and morals. In polygamous countries the poet or novelist, after exciting our interest by two rival heroines in love with one hero, is permitted to marry him to both; and so it is in the *Toy-Cart*, where the lawful wife, though she has prepared a suttee in expectation of her husband's death, submits without apparent reluctance to his union with the real heroine of the play. Though a courtesan, the latter is a wealthy and accomplished woman. Her passion is full of devotion and disinterestedness, resting on her admiration for the noble and virtuous character of the hero, for whom she has re-

jected the king's brother, and who, though sunk in the deepest poverty, is universally esteemed. The plot is lively, and as full of quick and sudden turns as a Spanish comedy.

The play begins with the usual invocation to Siva, after which there is an interlude, a modern interpolation, introduced on the revival of famous plays. In the opening scene the hero, a Brahman named Charudatta, thus, in a manly spirit, laments his poverty, or rather its consequences, of which it would be hard to find a truer description:

> I do not, trust me, grieve for my lost wealth;
> But that the guest no longer seeks the dwelling
> Whence wealth has vanished does, I own, afflict me.
> 'Tis true, I think not of my wasted fortunes.
> As fate decrees, so riches come and vanish.
> But I lament to find the love of friends
> Hangs all unstrung because a man is poor.
> And then with poverty comes disrespect;
> From disrespect does self-dependence fail;
> Then scorn and sorrow, following, overwhelm
> The intellect; and when the judgment fails,
> The being perishes; and thus, from poverty,
> Each ill that pains humanity proceeds.

In the next scene we are introduced to Vasantasena, the courtesan, persecuted by a persistent but unwelcome suitor, in the person of Samsthanaka, the king's brother. He is attended by a Vita, a character peculiar to the Hindoo drama, and resembling somewhat the parasite of the Greeks, though a man of culture and never playing a contemptible part. As Vasantasena is struggling to escape, the door of Charudatta's house opens, and while

she slips within, a maid comes forth, and in the dark is seized by mistake. The latter is rescued by Maitreya, a friend of Charudatta, who with great spirit asserts the dignity of the Brahman and the inviolability of his mansion, treating the king's brother with scant respect. Even the Vita is inspired with reverence, as appears in the following dialogue:

Vit.—I am afraid.

Sams.—Of what?

Vit.—Of the eminent virtues of Charudatta.

Sams.—Very eminent, indeed, when they cannot afford his visitors a dinner.

Vit.—Never mind that; he has become impoverished by his liberality, like the pool in the summer, which is exhausted by relieving the thirst of the travellers. In his prosperity he was kind to all.

Sams.—Who is this slave? the son of a slave? Is he a warrior? a hero? Is he Pandu? (And so he runs on through the whole list.)

Vit.—No, I will tell you who he is. He is Charudatta, the tree of plenty to the poor, bowed down by its abundant fruit. He is the cherisher of the good, the mirror of the wise, a touchstone of piety, the doer of good to all, of evil to none, a treasure of manly virtues, intelligent, liberal, and upright. In the plentitude of his merits he may be said to live; men like us only breathe. But come; we had better depart.

Within the house there is a scene between Charudatta and Vasantasena, conducted with the utmost propriety, the lady leaving in charge of the Brahman a valuable casket of jewels. In the two following acts we see something of low life in India, including an adventure at the door of a gambling-house and a burglary executed with

singular ingenuity, both advancing the story and introducing characters which contribute to the dénoûement. A thief has stolen the casket, which has been returned to the dwelling of the courtesan, and Charudatta's friend, Maitreya, is sent with a chain of precious jewels from his wife, to replace the loss, lest her husband's honor should be impeached. Very curious is the description of this modern Aspasia's mansion.

Att.—This is the outer door, sir.

Mait.—A very pretty entrance, indeed. The threshold is very neatly colored, well swept and watered; the floor is beautiful with strings of sweet flowers; the top of the gate is lofty and the jasmine festoon hangs tremblingly down, as if it were depending from the trunk of Indra's elephant. Over the door is a lofty arch of ivory; above it wave flags dyed with safflower, their fringes curling in the wind like fingers that beckon. On either side, the capitals of the door-posts support elegant crystal flower-pots, in which young mango trees are springing up. The door-panels are of gold, and the whole place seems to cry, "Away!" to a poor man, while its splendor catches the eye.

Att.—This leads to the first court. Enter, sir, enter.

Mait.—Bless me! Why here is a line of palaces as white as the stalk of the water-lily! Golden steps, set with precious stones, lead to the upper apartments, where crystal windows, festooned with pearls and bright as the eyes of a beautiful maid, look down upon Ujayin. The porter dozes on an easy chair, as stately as a Brahman deep in the Vedas, and the very crows, crammed with rice and curds, disdain the fragments of the sacrifice. Proceed.

Att.—This is the second court. Enter.

Mait.—Oh! here are the stables. The carriage oxen are sleek and fat, pampered with jawasa, I declare, and straw and oil-cakes are ready for them; their horns are bright with grease. Here we have a buffalo snorting indignantly, like a Brahman of high caste whom somebody has affronted; here the

ram stands to have his neck well rubbed, like a wrestler after a match; here they dress the manes of the horses; here is a monkey tied as fast as a thief; and here the drivers are plying their elephants with balls of rice and ghee.

Att.—This, sir, is the third gateway.

Mait.—Oh! this is the public court, where the young bucks of Ujayin assemble, and these are their seats, I suppose. The half-read book lies on the gaming-table, the devotees of which are resplendent with jewels. Yonder are some old libertines lounging around; they seem to have pictures in their hands, studying, I suppose, to improve their skill in the peace and war of love. What next?

Att.—This is the entrance to the fourth court.

Mait.—Oh, ho! this is a very gay scene. Here the drums, while beaten by taper fingers, emit, like clouds, a murmuring; there the cymbals, beating time, flash as they descend, like the unlucky stars that fall from heaven. The flute here breathes the soft hum of the bee; whilst here a damsel holds the vina in her lap, and frets its wires with her finger-nails, like some wild minx that sets her mark on the face of her offending swain. Some damsels are singing, like so many bees intoxicated with flowery nectar; others are practising the graceful dance; and others are employed in reading plays and poems. The place is hung with water-jars to catch the cooling breeze. What comes next?

Att.—This is the gate of the fifth court.

Mait.—Oh, how my mouth waters! what a savory scent of oil and asafœtida! The kitchen sighs softly forth its fragrant and abundant smoke: the odors are delicious; they fill me with rapture. The butcher's boy is washing the skin of an animal just slain. The cook is surrounded with dishes; the sweetmeats are mixing; the cakes are baking. (Aside.) O, that I could meet with some one to do me a friendly turn! one who would wash my feet and say, "Eat, sir, eat!" This is certainly Indra's heaven.

Att.—This is the sixth entry.

Mait.—The arched gateway is of gold and many colored gems on a ground of sapphire, and looks like the bow of Indra

on an azure sky. What is going forward here so busily? This is the jeweller's court; skilful artists are examining pearls, topazes, sapphires, emeralds, rubies, the lapis-lazuli; some pierce shells, and some cut coral; there we have perfumers drying the saffron-bags, shaking the musk-bags, expressing the sandal juice, and compounding essences. Whom have we here? Fair damsels and their gallants, laughing, talking, chewing musk and betel, and drinking wine. Here are the male and female hangers-on, men that neglected their own families and spent their all upon the harlot, and are now glad to quaff the drainings of her wine cup.

Att.—This is the seventh court. Enter.

Mait.—This is the aviary; very handsome, indeed. The doves bill and coo in comfort; the pampered parrot, stuffed with curds and rice, croaks like a Brahman pundit chanting a hymn from the Vedas; the maina chatters as glibly as a housemaid, issuing her mistress' commands to her fellow-servants; while the koil, crammed with juicy fruit, whines like a water-carrier; the quails fight; the partridges cry; the domestic peacock dances about delighted and fans the palace with his gem-emblazoned tail, as if to cool its heated walls; the swans, like balls of moonlight, roll about in pairs, and follow each graceful maid as if to learn to imitate her walk; while the long-legged cranes stalk about the court, like eunuchs on guard; some birds are hung in cages, either carried about or suspended from the balconies; so that the lady lives here among the winged race, as if she tenanted Indra's garden. Well, where do you go now?

Att.—Enter, sir, the eighth court.

We are here introduced to the brother and the mother of the fair mistress, who seem to live very comfortably in this questionable establishment.

Mait.—A very lovely scene: the numerous trees are bowed down by delicious fruit, and between them are silken swings constructed for the light form of youthful beauty; the yellow

jasmine, the graceful malati, the full-blossomed malleka, the blue clitoria, spontaneous shed their flowers and strew the ground with a carpet more lovely than any in the groves of Indra; the reservoir glows with the red lotus blossoms like the dawn with the fiery beams of the rising sun, and here the asoka tree, with its rich crimson blossoms, shines like a young warrior bathed with the sanguine shower of the furious fight.

As a specimen of poetry may now be given a scene from nature, completely Indian in all its features. Vasantasena, attended by the Vita, pays a visit to the Brahman, and is overtaken by a storm:

Vas.—The purple lightning darts such brilliant rays,
As gleam from golden lamps, in temples hung;
While, like the consort of an humble lord,
The timid moonlight peeps amid the clouds.

Vit.—There, like a string of elephants, the clouds
In regular file by lightning fillets bound,
Move slowly at the potent god's commands.
The heavens let down a silver chain to earth;
The earth that shines with buds and sheds sweet odors
Is pierced with showers, like diamond-shafted darts,
Launched from the rolling mass of deepest blue,
Which heaves before the breeze, and foams with flame;
Like ocean's dark waves by the tempest driven,
And tossing high their flashing surge to shore.

Vas.—Yonder rests one threatening cloud
Involving all the atmosphere in gloom.

Vit.—The countenance of heaven is close concealed,
By shades the lightning scant irradiates;
The day and night confusedly intermix
And all the lotus eyes of ether close.
The world is lulled to slumber by the sound
Of falling waters, sheltered by the clouds
That countless crowd the chambers of the sky.

Vas.—The stars are all extinct, as fades the memory
Of kindness in a bad man's heart. The heavens
Are shorn of all their radiance, as the wife
Her glory loses in her husband's absence.
In sooth, I think the firmament dissolves:
Melted by Indra's scorching bolt, it falls
In unexhausted torrents. Now the cloud
Ascends—now stoops—now roars aloud in thunder—
Now sheds its streams—now frowns with deeper gloom,—
Full of fantastic change, like one new raised
By fortune's fickle favors.

Vit.— Now the sky
With lightning gleams—now laughs with whitening storks—
Now glows with Indra's painted bow, that hurls
Its hundred shafts—now rattles with his bolt—
Now loud it chafes with rushing winds—and now
With clustering clouds, that roll their spiry folds,
Like sable snakes, along, it thickens dark,
As if 'twere clothed with vapors, such as spread
When incense soars in curling wreaths to heaven.

Vas.—Shame on thee, cloud! that seekest to affright me!
With thy loud threats, and with thy watery shafts,
Wouldst stay my progress, hastening to my love?
Indra, I violate no vows to thee,
That thou shouldst thunder angrily reproof.
It ill becomes thee to obstruct my path.
Draw off thy clouds, in pity to my passion.

The friendship between the Brahman and the devoted Vasantasena is no sooner established than it suffers a fatal reverse. They agree to meet in a public garden, in the outskirts of the city, and Charudatta's carriage is at the door to convey the lady. At that instant the insurgent Aryaka rushes in, pursued by the king's

guards, and leaps into the carriage, which drives off. At the same time the chariot of the king's brother is stopped at the same door, and into this the lady unwittingly enters. On her arrival at the garden, she discovers that she has fallen into the hands of her importunate but odious admirer; and as she scornfully rejects his advances, this cruel prince, notwithstanding the remonstrance of the Vita, strangles her with his own hands, and leaves her, as he supposes, dead. She is restored to life by a Buddhist devotee, whom, in the early part of the play, her generosity had rescued from difficulties, and enabled to renounce the world.

The ninth act opens with the meeting of the court of justice, before which the king's guilty brother appears, and denounces Charudatta as the murderer of Vasantasena. The reverence of the judges for his character and his own defence are in vain, though he takes a high tone of vindication.

Charudatta.—The wretch that sickens at another's merits,
The mind by passion blinded, bent to ruin
The object of its malice, do not claim
Reply, nor any heed to what they utter,
Which, from their very nature, must be falsehood.
For me—you know me! Would I pluck a flower,
I draw the tender creeper gently to me,
Nor rudely rob it of its clustering beauty.
How think you, then, could I with violent hands
Tear from their lovely seat those jetty locks,
More glossy than the black bee's wing? or how
So wrong my nature, and betray my love,
As, with remorseless heart, to blast in death
The weeping charms that vainly sued for mercy?

The circumstantial evidence, however, is so strong against him that, in the last act, he is led forth to death by two executioners. As he passes he observes,

> From every window lovely faces shed
> The kindly drops, and bathe me with their tears.

His sentence is read with all its terrible formality.

Charudatta.—Dreadful reverse to hear such wretches herald
My death, and blacken thus with lies my fame;
Not so my sires—for them the frequent shout
Has filled the sacred temple, where the crowd
Of holy Brahmans to the gods proclaimed
The costly rite accomplished; and shall I,
Alas, Vasantasena, who have drunk
Thy nectar'd tones, from lips whose ruby glow
Disgraced the coral, and displayed the charms
Of teeth more pearly than the moon's chaste light,
Profane my ears with such unworthy draughts,
Or stain my unslaved spirit with the pledge
Of poison, brewed by infamy and shame?

An affecting parting with his child follows; it ends with these words, as he embraces the boy:

> This is the truest wealth; love equal smiles
> On poor and rich: the bosom's precious balm
> Is not the fragrant herb, nor costly unguent,
> But nature's breath, affection's holy perfume.

At the instant before execution, Vasantasena appears. Tidings arrive that the insurgent Aryaka has dethroned the reigning king. Charudatta is just in time to prevent his wife from mounting the fatal pile,

on which she is preparing to burn herself, notwithstanding her husband's well-known passion for the other lady. This Hindoo Griselda receives the fair courtesan as her sister, that is, as her husband's second wife. The new king, in honor of her worth, requests her acknowledgment as a kinswoman, and a veil is thrown over her head to betoken her abandonment of her former life. And so ends this remarkable picture of Oriental manners.

VII.

Persia and the Orient.

Oriental life and society, especially in southern countries, stand in violent contrast with the multitudinous detail and the vast average of comfort among western nations. Life in the East is short, hazardous, intense, and with the greatest possible extremes of poverty and wealth. Its elements are few and simple, without the endless gradations of European existence, but rapidly reaching the best and the worst. The rich feed on fruits and game,—the poor, on a watermelon's rind. All or nothing is the genius of Oriental life. Favor of the sultan, or his displeasure, is a question of fate, and a war is undertaken for a distich, as in Europe for a duchy. The tropical sun, and the sudden and rank plenty which his heat engenders, make subsistence easy; on the other hand, the desert, the simoom, the mirage, the lion, and the plague endanger it, and life hangs on the contingency of a skin of water more or less. The very geography of old Persia showed these contrasts. "My father's empire," said the younger Cyrus to Xenophon, "is so large that people perish with cold at the north, while they are suffocated with heat at the south."

The temperament of the people agrees with this life in extremes. Religion and poetry are all their civilization. The religion teaches an inexorable destiny. It distinguishes only two days in each man's history: his birthday, called the day of the lot, and the day of judgment. Courage and absolute submission to what is appointed him are his virtues. Social conditions, occupation and natural environment are factors in encouraging and sustaining the religious sentiment of the people.

The favor of soil and climate, causing the earth to yield its fruits abundantly, and encouraging an out-door life, are favorable to physical and intellectual development. As with the Hindoos, the Persians and Arabs, with abundant leisure and few books, are exquisitely sensible to the pleasure of poetry. Layard, the explorer of Nineveh, relates the effect which the *improvisatori* produce on the children of the desert. "When the bard improvised an amatory ditty, the young chief's excitement was almost beyond control. The other Bedouins were scarcely less moved by these rude measures, which have the same kind of effect on the wild tribes of the Persian mountains. Such verses, chanted by their self-taught poets, or by the girls of their encampment, will drive warriors to the combat, fearless of death, or prove an ample reward, on their return from the dangers of the fight. The excitement they produce exceeds that of the grape. He who would understand the influence of the Homeric ballads in the heroic ages should witness the effect which similar compositions have upon the wild nomads of the East." Elsewhere he adds, "Poetry and flowers are the wine and spirits of the Arab; a couplet

is equal to a bottle, and a rose to a dram, without the evil effect of either."

National Poetry.

Persian poetry rests on a mythology whose few legends are connected with the Jewish history, and the anterior traditions of the Pentateuch. The principal figure in the allusions of Persian poetry is Solomon. Solomon had three talismans: first, the signet ring, by which he commanded the spirits, and on the stone of which was engraven the name of God; second, the glass, in which he saw the secret of his enemies, and the causes of all things; the third, the east wind, which was his horse. His counsellor was Simorg, king of birds, the all-wise fowl, who had lived ever since the beginning of the world, and now lives alone on the highest summit of Mount Kaf. No fowler has taken him and none now living has seen him. By him Solomon was taught the language of birds, so that he heard secrets whenever he went into his gardens. When Solomon travelled, his throne was placed on a carpet of green silk, of a length and breadth sufficient for all his army to stand upon,—men placing themselves on his right hand, and the spirits on his left. When all were in order, the east wind, at his command, took up the carpet, and transported it, with all that were upon it, whither he pleased,—the army of birds at the same time flying overhead, and forming a canopy to shade them from the sun. It is related that, when the queen of Sheba came to visit Solomon, he had built, against her arrival, a palace, of which the

floor or pavement was of glass, laid over running water, in which fish were swimming. The queen was deceived thereby, and raised her robes, thinking she was to pass through the water. On the occasion of Solomon's marriage, all the beasts, laden with presents, appeared before his throne. Behind them came the ant with a blade of grass: Solomon did not despise the gift of the ant. Asaph, the vizier, at a certain time, lost the seal of Solomon, which one of the Dews, or evil spirits, found, and, governing in the name of Solomon, deceived the people.

As to the origin of the national poetry of Persia there is much difference of opinion; but to the Sasanian monarch Bahram V. who reigned between 420 and 439 A. D., is commonly ascribed the invention of metre and rhyme, while by other Sasanian rulers literature was freely encouraged. According to the oldest of biographical writers, the first real poem in modern Persian was composed in 809, in honor of Mamun, son of Harun al Rashid. But the early growth of Persian poetry was slow; for the Arabic language had gained too firm a footing to be readily supplanted by a literature still in its infancy. Even among the few and fragmentary verses of the earlier poets may be traced, however, the principal forms of poetry now in use; the ode, in the shape of a love-ditty, wine song, or religious hymn, and others corresponding to epic, didactic and satirical poems. In writings of a religious character may be noticed the same tendency as in later productions, to amalgamate the enforced doctrines of Islam with Aryan sentiments and to reconcile the strict deism of the

Mahometan faith with the more or less pantheistic ideas of the disciples of Zoroaster.

Dakiki and Firdausi.

Beginning with the latter half of the tenth century, when we enter upon the golden era of Persian literature, native poetry became extremely abundant, and so continued into the present age, the *Treasure of Marvellous Matters,* published about 1803, containing the biographies of more than three thousand poets, with specimens from their works. By order of Mansur I. was translated from the Arabic the Universal History of Tabari, and this, the oldest prose writing in modern Persian, published about 963, is still regarded as a classic, on account of its easy and graceful style. By his son and successor, a man full of enthusiasm for the glorious annals of the old Iranian kingdom, Dakiki, his court poet, was ordered to translate into Persian verse the Parsi collection of legends and traditions of the heroic ages of Iran. Soon after beginning his work, Dakiki was assassinated; but the task was completed by a still abler writer, in the person of Firdausi, who after thirty-five years of incessant toil, wrote the last distichs of the famous *Shah-nama.* This has been termed by Sir William Jones "a glorious monument of oriental genius and learning, which, if it should ever be commonly read in its original language, will contest the palm of invention with Homer himself." It is a characteristic of oriental compilers, translators and authors, especially when obeying the mandates of rulers

and building up permanent public records, to exhibit a greater degree of patience, industry and learning than we are apt to find in other branches of literature.

The Shah-nama.

The *Shah-nama* deals with the annals of the mythical and heroic kings of the country: of Karun, the Persian Crœsus, the immeasurably rich gold-maker, who, with all his treasures, lies buried not far from the Pyramids, in the sea which bears his name; of Jamschid, the binder of demons, whose reign lasted seven hundred years; of Kai Kaus, whose palace was built by demons on Alberz, in which gold and silver and precious stones were used so lavishly, such being the brilliancy produced by their combined effect that night and day appeared the same; of Afrasiyab, strong as an elephant, whose shadow extended for miles, whose heart was bounteous as the ocean, and his hands like the clouds when rain falls to gladden the earth. The crocodile in the rolling stream was not secure from Afrasiyab; yet when he came to fight against the generals of Kaus, he was but an insect in the grasp of Rustem, who seized him by the girdle, and dragged him from his horse. Rustem felt such anger at the arrogance of the king of Mazinderan, that every hair on his body started up like a spear. In a *Shah-nama* of a much later date and by another author is a poetical history of the Shahs Ismail and Tahmasp; in a third are related the exploits of Abbas the great; and even the atrocities of Timur and the cruelties of Nadir Shah have been chronicled in epic verse.

But the national epic, with its legitimate and illegitimate offspring, is not the only bequest that Firdausi left to his country. It was he who gave the first impulse to the higher development in other forms of poetic art, which were to flourish in later times, and especially to the romantic, didactic and mystic, even his own age producing some who excelled in these departments. Though Unsuri was the court poet, Firdausi was the central sun around which revolved the four hundred minor stars who formed the "Table round" in the magnificent palace of Mahmud of Ghazna, whose empire extended from the Caucasus to Bengal and from Bokhara to the Indian ocean. Nizami, who has given us some fine descriptions of the struggles and passions of the human heart, owes much to the love stories of the *Shah-nama*. Such, indeed, was the fascination of that epic that, from its first appearance, there was a keen competition among the younger poets as to who should produce the best imitation, and, under various forms, this competition has lasted unto the present day. It is safe to say it will continue for an indefinite period, for, while spirited in all respects, it has ever been carried on with fairness and intellectual profit.

Among the latest productions of Firdausi was one dealing with the Biblical story of Joseph, which now for the first time received poetic treatment, and proved an attractive theme to other writers of epic verse. Unsuri's romance of *Wamik u Adhra* is based on a popular Iranian legend of great antiquity and has been a favorite subject for modern poets. Of equal antiquity is Jurjani's love-story, *Wis u Ramin*, a poem of great artistic

value, and resembling closely *Tristan und Isolt*, one of the epic masterpieces of mediæval German literature.

Didactic and Mystic Poetry.

To Firdausi may also be traced the origin of didactic and mystic poetry, of which the earliest specimens date from the twelfth century; for in the *Shahnama* is not only a strong didactic element but the mystical tendency which has since pervaded the literary productions of Persia. In numerous verses are allusions to the Sufic pantheism, which strives to reconcile philosophy with revealed religion, and centres in the doctrine of the universality and absolute unity of God, who is diffused through every particle of the visible and invisible world, and to whom the human soul, during its temporary exile in the prison-house of the body, strives to return, through progressive stages, till it is sufficiently purified to be again absorbed in him from whom it came. Often does the poet cry out against the vanity of all earthly joys and pleasures, expressing a passionate desire for a better home, or for a reunion with the Godhead. In one of the most striking passages of the great epic is described the mysterious disappearance of Shah Kaikhosrau, who, when at the height of his fame and splendor, suddenly renounces the world in utter disgust, and, carried away by his fervent longing for an abode of everlasting tranquility, vanishes forever from the midst of his companions.

The *Book of Enlightenment*, by Khosrau, is full of sound moral and ethical maxims, with slightly mystical

tendencies. In the *Garden of Truth*, by Hakim Sanai, is one of the earliest of Sufic text-books, referred to by all the later poets of this sect as an unrivalled exposition of spiritual knowledge. In its ten cantos is skillfully blended the purely didactic element, enhanced by pleasant stories and anecdotes, with the principal tenets of theosophy. One of the greatest pantheistic writers of all ages was Farid-uddin Attar, who after renouncing all worldly affairs, and performing a pilgrimage to Mecca, devoted himself to a stern ascetic life, and to the composition of Sufic works. Among his prose writings is the valuable *Biography of Eminent Mystic Divines*, and foremost among his poems are the *Book of Counsels* and *Bird Conversations*. The latter is an allegorical poem, interspersed with moral stories and pious contemplations, all ingeniously illustrating the final absorption of the Sufi in the deity, while the seven valleys through which the birds are made to travel, on their way to the fabulous phœnix, or simurg, are the seven stations of the mystic road that leads from earthly troubles to the much coveted Nirvana.

Lyric Poetry.

Lyric poets, pure and simple, are numbered by the hundred, all of them singing in endless strains the pleasures of love and wine, the beauties of nature, and the almighty power of the Creator. There are the legends of Chiser, the fountain of life, of Tuba, the tree of life, the romances of the loves of Leila and Medjun, of Chosru and Schirin, and those of the nightingale

for the rose, of pearl-diving, and the virtues of gems, the cohol, a cosmetic by which pearls and eyebrows are indelibly stained black, the bladder in which musk is brought, the down of the lip, the mole on the cheek, the eyelash, lilies, roses, tulips, and jasmines, all helping to form the staple imagery of Persian odes. But it was reserved for the incomparable genius of Hafiz to give to the world some of the most perfect models of lyric composition, and after his death, near the close of the fourteenth century, the lines which he laid down were followed by countless imitators.

The Persians have epics and tales, but for the most part they affect short poems and epigrams. Gnomic verses, rules of life, conveyed in a lively image, especially in an image addressed to the eye, and contained in a single stanza, were always current in the East; and if the poem is long it is only a string of unconnected verses. They use an inconsecutiveness quite alarming to Western logic, and the connection between the stanzas of their longer odes is much like that between the refrain of old English ballads.

Take as specimens of these gnomic verses the following:

> The secret that should not be blown
> Not one of thy nation must know;
> You may padlock the gate of a town,
> But never the mouth of a foe.

Or this of Enweri:

> On prince or bride no diamond stone
> Half so gracious ever shone,

As the light of enterprise
Beaming from a young man's eyes.

Or this of Ibn Jemin:

Two things thou shalt not long for, if thou love a life serene:
A woman for thy wife, though she were a crowned queen;
And, the second, borrowed money, though the smiling lender say
That he will not demand the debt until the judgment day.

Or this on friendship:

He who has a thousand friends has not a friend to spare,
And he who has one enemy shall meet him everywhere.

Hafiz, as before remarked, is the prince of Persian epic poets, and in his extraordinary gifts adds to some of the attributes of Pindar, Anacreon, Horace and Burns, the insight of a mystic that sometimes affords a deeper glance at Nature than belongs to any of these bards. He accosts all topics with an easy audacity. "He only," he says, "is fit for company who knows how to prize earthly happiness at the value of a nightcap. Our father Adam sold Paradise for two kernels of wheat; then blame me not if I hold it dear at one grapestone."

The Song of Seid Nimetollah.

Among the religious customs of the dervises is an astronomical dance, in which the dervis imitates the movements of the heavenly bodies by spinning on his own axis, whilst, at the same time, he revolves round

the sheikh in the centre, representing the sun, and as he spins he sings the song of Seid Nimetollah of Kuhistan:

Spin the ball! I reel, I burn,
Nor head from foot can I discern,
Nor my heart from love of mine,
Nor the wine-cup from the wine.
All my doing, all my leaving,
Reaches not to my perceiving.
Lost in whirling spheres I rove,
And know only that I love.

I am seeker of the stone,
Living gem of Solomon;
From the shore of souls arrived,
In the sea of sense I dived;
But what is land, or what is wave
To me who only jewel crave?
Love's the air-fed fire intense,
My heart is the frankincense;
As the rich aloe's flames, I glow,
Yet the censer cannot know.
I'm all-knowing, yet unknowing;
Stand not, pause not, in my going.

Ask not me, as Muftis can,
To recite the Alcoran;
Well I love the meaning sweet,—
I tread the book beneath my feet.

Lo! the God's love blazes higher,
Till all difference expire.
What are Moslems? what are Giaours?
All are Love's, and all are ours.
I embrace the true believers,
But I reck not of deceivers.
Firm to heaven my bosom clings,
Heedless of inferior things;
Down on earth, there, under foot,
What men chatter know I not.

Here ends the song, which, as is usual with Persian verse, is of a high imaginative and amatory character.

The Religious Drama.

Turning to the dramatic poetry of Persia, it may first be remarked that, while the drama proper dates only from the beginning of the nineteenth century, its source may be traced back for many hundreds of years. Like that of the Greeks, it is essentially of religious origin, the offspring of a purely religious ceremony, which, for many centuries, has been annually performed in the sacred month of Meharrem. The ceremony takes the form of mourning and lamentation in memory of the tragic fate of the house of the caliph Ali, the hero of the Shiah Persians. The performances are analogous to European passion-plays, dealing exclusively with the martyrdom of Ali's son, Hossein, who, with his family, was massacred at the battle of Kerbela. Within recent years, however, the range of this drama has been considerably extended, and Biblical stories and Christian legends have been incorporated. The secular drama has only lately been admitted to Persia. While it attracts crowds, it is looked upon with disfavor by the religious leaders of the people. The national drama is still the religious play.

Tradition states that, during the brief Deilamee dynasty, about 933 to 986, the practice began of commemorating the events in the history of the Shiah sect by recitations, in the form of religious rhapsodies, from pulpits erected in the public squares or in the residences

of the chief dignitaries, during the three months accounted holy by the Shiahs. These recitations varied according to the enthusiasm, the imagination, or the talent of the speaker; they were called Rhozeh, and continue in force to the present day, halls being especially constructed for the purpose. But the zeal of the Sufavees, aided as it was by an opulence and splendor which rendered the reigns of Shah Abbas the Great and his successors proverbial, piously suggested more pomp and circumstance in the commemoration of the martyrdom of the saints of the Shiah faith.

The Sacred Months.

There is for all Mohammedans alike a sacred month devoted to an ordeal of fasting from sunrise to sunset. It consists in abstaining, not merely from certain articles of food, but from every form of nourishment or stimulant, including water and smoking, for the entire day. In summer the ordeal is, indeed, one of the most trying ever intended for the torture of man. The fast is called the Ramazan, and in order to sustain the faith and fortitude of true believers at this season, the Shiahs allow representations of the Tazieh and the exhortations of the Rhozeh during that month. But the usual time for these representations is during the two holy months of Moharrem and Safar, in which the expounders of the Ali sect have contrived to bring closely together a number of important and significant events. Among them are the deaths of Hasan and of Hossein, the birth of the prophet Mohammed, the martyrdom of

the Imam Rezah, and the death of Fatimah, the favorite daughter of Mohammed.

A month before Moharrem occurs the solemn festival of Courban Bairan, or the "feast of the sacrifice," in which the chief ceremony is the slaughter of the camel, and this is celebrated in every city of Persia.

The month of mourning brings a practical cessation of all but the most important labor. Business in the bazaars nearly comes to a stop, and as evening approaches, the wild shout of the processions of fanatics may be heard from all parts of the city. The first ten days of Moharrem are especially devoted to the commemoration of the massacre of Hossein and his family; but it is not until the last four or five days of this period that these processions, called testeh, become so demonstrative as to prove a disturbing element. During the last two or three days of this public demonstration it is considered prudent for all foreigners and unbelievers to attract as little attention as possible, lest, if seen by these excited throngs, they be insulted or even assailed by some of the mob, now frenzied by religious excitement to an extraordinary degree.

The Persian Passion-Play.

But every circumstance connected with this commemorative period of public lamentation is quite subordinate, and as it were subsidiary, to the Tazieh, or dramatic representation of the tragedy which involved the descendants of Ali and Fatimah in one common catastrophe. In all parts of Persia this tragedy is re-

produced during the sacred months of mourning; but one must see the performance represented under royal patronage, and honored by the Shah himself and the royal family, in order to understand the varied character and significance of a drama in which the combined religious and patriotic fervor of a great sect and people finds its most ample expression.

It is not easy for those of other beliefs to gain access to the royal Takieh, as the building is called where the drama of the *Tazieh* is unfolded for ten successive days. While the leading purpose of the *Tazieh* is to represent the slaughter of Hossein, the son of Ali, and his family, the chief incidents of this event are not always represented in the order in which they occurred. In several instances episodes are placed on the stage which happened after the final catastrophe. The solemnity of the occasion, and the monotony which might occur from twenty successive acts played in the afternoon and evening of ten consecutive days, is also relieved by occasional episodes having but a remote relation to the chief events of the drama. Thus alternately entertained or aroused to profound emotion, the audience is carried easily along from scene to scene until the tenth day, called the "day of slaughter," when Hossein is slain, at which time the excitement of the audience, and in fact of the entire city, reaches a point bordering on frenzy.

The Royal Theatre.

Mr. S. G. W. Benjamin, who went in 1882 as the first United States Minister to Persia, witnessed the

play at the Shah's Theatre in Teheran. To disarm the prejudices of the Mohammedans he wore the tall black conical hat of dyed sheepskin worn in public by Persian gentlemen. He thus describes the theatre: "I was surprised to see an immense circular building as large as the amphitheatre of Verona, solidly constructed of brick. Ferashes, or liveried footmen, cleared the way before us. Thrashing with their staves right and left, they opened a way through the crowd that packed the great portal, and entering a dark, vaulted vestibule, I groped, or rather was impelled by the throng, toward a staircase crowded with servants, whose masters had already arrived. Like all stairs in Persia, these were adapted to the stride of giants. A succession of springs upward finally landed me on the first gallery, which led around the building. A few steps in the twilight, and then an embroidered curtain was raised and I entered the box of the Zahir-i-Doulch, a son-in-law of the Shah. It was in two parts, the first higher than the other; stepping into the front and lower division, I was invited to recline at the left of my host upon a superbly embroidered cushion of velvet, this being the seat of honor. The walls of the loggia were of plain brick, but they were hung with cashmere shawls of great price, and the choicest of rugs enriched the floor. A number of Persian gentlemen of lower rank occupied the back part of the apartment by invitation; all alike were seated on their knees and heels, a most painful position for one not accustomed to it from infancy. I was obliged to compromise by sitting cross-legged, Turkish fashion. It is worthy of notice that a

nearly life-size portrait of Mahomet hung on the wall. Of course it was an imaginary likeness, and the prophet himself, who denounced paintings of any object having life, would have condemned its appearance there; but the Persians, having a marked aptitude for the fine arts, have found means of explaining away the precepts of their religious founder, when it has suited their tastes and convenience to do so. The prophet was represented as a handsome man in the prime of life, with ruddy and sensuous rather than reflective features. On his head was a green turban; he was seated cross-legged, with a naked scimitar across his knees.

"On looking forth over the vast arena a sight met my gaze which was indeed extraordinary. The interior of the building is nearly two hundred feet in diameter and some eighty feet high. A domical frame of timbers, firmly spliced and braced with iron, springs from the walls, giving support to the awning that protects the interior from the sunlight and the rain. From the centre of the dome a large chandelier was suspended, furnished with four electric burners—a recent innovation. A more Oriental form of illuminating the building was seen in the prodigious number of lustres and candlesticks, all of glass and protected from the air by glass shades open at the top and variously colored; they were concentrated against the wall in immense glittering clusters. Estimating from those attached to one box, I judged there were upward of five thousand candles in these lustres.

"The arrangement of the boxes, or more strictly loggias, was peculiar. The walls nowhere indicated any

serious attempt at decoration, except a string-course of brick and gilded Saracenic cornices over the arched loggias. Nor was there any regularity of design in the details, such as gives majesty to the arrangement of the galleries in Roman amphitheatres. And yet the general effect was picturesquely grand, as if the architect was so conscious that by merely following the arrangement suggested by the aim in view he would achieve a noble architectural expression, that he disdained to depend on anything but the constructive details to justify his genius. For example, one side of the loggia of the Shah, boldly disregarding symmetry, raised the arch of its broad window to twice the dimensions of the neighboring loggias. Opposite again was a row of loggias associated together by a line of semi-Saracenic archivolts over the windows, which were completely concealed by a green lattice and framed with mouldings painted green and gold; these were appropriated to the wives of the Shah. Midway between these two divisions was still another group of latticed windows, and opposite to them, in turn, was a deep arched loggia resembling a reception-room, quite two stories in height, intended for a daughter of the Shah. As she did not occupy it when I was there, the gauze-like drapery was raised, displaying still another likeness of the prophet. As if to prevent monotony from too symmetrical a design, the entrances to the floor or pit differed in width, the widest being some twenty-five feet, while the arched roofs extended to a height of thirty and forty feet respectively. These vaulted passages, being of course pierced through the walls, gave a means for gauging

the vast solidity of the structure, the walls being nearly fifty feet in thickness on the ground, thus adding wonderfully to the really grand effect of this stupendous structure."

"If this royal theatre of Teheran were of polished marble, like the amphitheatres of old, it would scarcely yield to them in the beauty and impressiveness of its interior. Especially is to be noticed the masterly arrangement of the arches to produce strength and beauty alike. In the centre of the arena of the Tazieh was a circular stage of masonry, raised three feet and approached by two stairways. On one side of the building a pulpit of white marble was attached to the wall, of the form universally followed in Mahometan countries; that is, a lofty, narrow flight of steps protected by a solid balustrade on each side, and terminating in a small platform. The speaker has no other platform than the upper step, which is crowned with a canopy, and according as the spirit moves him he occupies various steps of this pulpit platform. The spiritual exaltation, or the age and rank of the speaker, suggests from what elevation he shall exhort the people seated on the pavement below him."

A Persian Audience.

But still more remarkable is the extraordinary spectacle offered by the assembled multitude. The entire arena, with the exception of a narrow passage around the stage, is absolutely packed with women, three or four thousand in number and seated cross-legged on the earthen floor, which is slightly sloping, in order to en-

able those in the rear to see over the heads of those before them. They are uniformly dressed in blue-black mantles, each having a white veil drawn tightly over the head and face, with a small piece of beautifully-worked lace directly before the eyes. This is attached to the back of the head by a glittering buckle, those of the wealthier women sparkling with gold and brilliants, the only vanity a Persian woman is permitted to indulge in at places of public resort. This seems like a severe restraint on the natural disposition of the sex; yet it is said that in no other country have women more general influence and power. But they have been brought up in the belief that religion requires the face of women to be concealed from public gaze, and the notion remains as strong as the motive for chastity.

Moving among the spectators can be seen old men with cups and jugs of water, doling out drinks as an act of devotion; this they have done for many years at the Tazieh, in order to remind the people that Hossein suffered in his last hours from the agonies of thirst. As at a Spanish bull-fight, so here are venders of refreshments, with lemonade, tea, and kalians, or water-pipes, smoked by women as well as men. Most of the men present are in the loggias, and when the pit is full and others try to wedge their way in, the ushers and guards drive them out with merciless violence. Refreshments are served repeatedly; but after the performance begins both smoking and refreshments are banned, not only for purposes of good order and hearing, but as indicating a frivolity inconsistent with the tragical events of the drama.

Some zealot may give vent to a profound "Ya Ali! Ya Hossein!" then many voices join in; and thus by gradual accessions of fervor expectation is intensified and piety increased to a degree proper to a thorough appreciation of what is to come. The holy zeal of the faithful is further stimulated by the mullahs, both old and young, who ascend the pulpit in turn and exhort the people with a religious rhapsody, on the virtues and martyrdom of Ali and the holy Imams. Whenever some especially eloquent period is rolled forth in fervid tones, responses are heard from every quarter, now a loud "Ya Hossein!" or anon the sound of some one smiting his bare bosom.

Processions.

At length is seen, gathering in the entrance opposite the royal loggia, a crowd which forms itself into a procession of nearly two hundred men, who prove to be servants of the Shah's household. Led by the head-steward of the palace they enter the theatre, two by two, slowly marching around the circular stage. They are all dressed in black mourning livery; each has the breast bare, and with regular cadence, as they march, they smite their bosoms with the right hand. The skin is already crimson, for twice daily they repeat this extraordinary performance. Just as at the crucifixion of Christ the spectators smote their breasts, so this has, in all ages, been one of the most common of Oriental ceremonies for expressing lamentation.

This procession, like all which follow, delays a mo-

ment opposite the royal loggia and salutes the Shah. Directly after them comes a confused group of men in Arab costume, who beat their breasts in unison with a force that excites apprehension lest they should kill themselves, smiting over the heart with such continuous violence. Then follows a group nude above the middle, holding in each hand a large block of hard wood, which they strike together with a sharp, exasperating rhythm. The two latter groups, like the chorus in the Greek plays, are collectively symbolical of a class. Here they represent the wild Arabs of the desert, who from afar behold the march of Hossein through their country, and bewail their inability to assist the martyrs in their final struggle. As the last of the three processions files out of the building, the strains of martial music burst on the ear, solemnly breathing a funeral dirge. It is one of the military bands of the Shah, and is followed in steady procession by six other regimental bands, each in turn striking up a minor strain.

When the last band ceases its music and disappears, another group begins to collect. In front, facing the audience, are several children dressed in green; at their side warriors gather, glittering in the chain-armor and gold-inlaid helmets of past ages. Suddenly on the solemn silence, like the trill of a bird at night, comes the voice of one of the children, low and solemn, then rising to a high, clear tone, indescribably wild and thrillingly pathetic. This song of lamentation announces to the spectators that they are to prepare themselves to behold a soul-moving tragedy—the martyrdom of Hossein and the grandchildren of the prophet. Other voices gradu-

ally join in the chant, one by one, until a sublime choral elegy peals over the vast arena with such an agony of sound that it actually seems as if the actors were uttering their own death-song. Still chanting, the troop gradually enter the arena, and with slow and measured tread march around the stage and ascend the platform. There they form in double ranks, and with low obeisance pay their salutations to the Shah.

There is no scenery on the stage; the only objects it contains are such as might cause amusement among those who reflect on what was really the condition of affairs in the far-away little camp by the banks of the tawny Euphrates, where in the seventh century the group of martyrs surrounded by savage hordes, suffered with thirst and perished miserably on the hot wastes of Mesopotamia. One can scarcely repress a smile at the chairs overlaid with beaten gold, which are brought from the royal treasury, and the sofa and the beds covered with canopies to represent the tents. But these magnificent chairs really indicate the reverence which Persia to-day extends across the ages to the champions of the faith. It is not things but men that rivet the rapt attention of the vast audience: not material objects, but the achievements and utterances of souls seen and heard from lofty heights of moral grandeur.

Actors.

The martyr Hossein was represented by an actor named Mullah Hossein, draped in massive robes of green and cashmere, inwrought with gold: his head

covered with a large turban. During most of the performance he sat with head bent, reflecting on his approaching and inevitable doom. His half-brother Abbas, the son of Ali but not of Fatimah, was personated by Mirza Gholam Hossein, who wore a Saracenic coat-of-mail of wire links, terminating in a white tunic. His head was protected by a grand helmet of the olden time, graced with plumes. He was of a handsome cast and finely shaped, presenting altogether an heroic appear- attired in similar fashion. The heroine of the drama was Zeineb, the sister of Hossein, whose part was played by an actor named Mullah Hossein Zeineb Khan. He spoke in falsetto, as did all the female characters who were represented by men or boys. Zeineb, at the opening of the scene, appears shrouded in a thick mantle and seated on the earth bemoaning her fate. Most of the children of the various families gathered in the camp are also grouped on the sand, representing a feature of the tragedy analogous to the chorus of the Greek plays.

The entire performance is directed by a prompter, who walks unconcernedly on the stage, giving hints to the players or placing the younger actors in position. At the proper moment also, by a motion of the hand, he gives orders for the music to strike up or stop. But the spectator, even if a foreigner, soon ceases to notice him at all, or, indeed, to be aware of his presence; so interested does he become in the extraordinary character of all that is going on before him that he even forgets there is no scenery, and seems to be gazing upon actual events as they occurred on the banks of the Euphrates centuries ago, when the renowned caliph

was battling with his enemies, and the fate of his dynasty hung upon the fortunes of war.

Orchestra.

The orchestra consists of a band of performers stationed at the top of the building. Their instruments are kettle-drums and long, straight horns, harsh and doleful, and startling enough to wake the dead. A signal at the beginning of each scene of the Tazieh awakes the confused war-din of the kettle-drums, and instantly afterward follows a terrific blast from the horns. At the close of a scene the same fierce music stimulates the glowing enthusiasm of the faithful, and nerves their zeal for events yet more tragic and sublime.

A Stirring Scene.

One of the most memorable scenes is that in which Zeineb and Hossein bemoan their inevitable fate, and encourage each other to mutual endurance and fortitude. As the scene closes, Zeineb sinks into the dust, and throwing ashes on her head lapses into silence. Superb in the representation of woe and affliction is the scene which follows, when the young Ali Acbar, son of the dead Hasan, heroically resolves to fight his way to the river and bring water for the sufferers in the camp. Clad in armor, the youthful hero submits himself as a sacrifice, for he hardly can expect to return. When he chants, as it were, his own requiem, the words ring forth like a trumpet-note to the farthest nook of

the vast building, and the response comes in united wailings from the thousands gathered there. Beginning in a low murmur, like the sigh of a coming gale, the strange sound rises and falls like the weird music of the wind in an Atlantic storm. For several moments sobs and sighs, and now and again a half-suppressed shriek, sweep from one side of the building to the other. Strong men weep; there is hardly a dry eye in the audience, and even foreigners are deeply moved by this impressive scene.

The critical observer must admit that the conditions are exactly such as are likely to produce genuine emotion. The scenes portrayed represent incidents of the most tragic character, which have actually occurred, and which in the course of ages have become part of the life and thought of the people who are now so vividly reminded of them. A belief in the suffering of the Saviour is not more indelibly impressed on the heart of the true Christian than the belief which the true Shiah maintains in the sufferings of the sons of Ali.

Ali Acbar.

A milk-white Arabian steed from the royal stables, superbly caparisoned, is now led into the arena, and after receiving the moving farewell of Hossein and Zeineb and the God-speed of the chorus, Ali Acbar mounts and starts forth on his perilous errand. Instantly, from several quarters, appear troops of the enemy on horseback and on foot, armed Arabs of the desert, who crowd after him in fierce pursuit. It is

wildly exciting to see this mad race around the arena, where thousands of women are crowded down to the very edge of the narrow lane which is thronged with steeds and warriors. But no one flinches; the horses are well trained, and no accident results. Finally, Ali Acbar turns into one of the avenues of exit and disappears, surrounded by the pursuing host. Presently he falls covered with wounds.

In the next scene, after a savage peal from the war-horns, Shemr, the leader of the beleaguering army, appears, clad in complete armor, and summons the camp to surrender. Then he proceeds to hold a long colloquy with Abbas, the half-brother of Hossein, ordering him to yield before his outnumbered troops should be annihilated by an overwhelming host. Hossein remains silent at one side, while Abbas unconditionally rejects terms which imply the abandonment of the claims of the house of Ali and Fatimah to the caliphate, and proudly flings defiance at the foe.

In closing, Abbas, as if endowed with prophetic vision, delivers a noble apostrophe to the future splendor of Persia, the asylum for the devoted followers of Ali, and his eloquent bursts of poetic fire call forth deep murmurs of applause. Waving his mailed hand with lofty scorn, Shemr, with equal dramatic effect, lays on Hossein the responsibility for the disasters to come, and, remounting his steed, departs.

Now night comes on; by tacit consent the decisive conflict is deferred until the following day. Overpowered with anxiety and suspense, Hossein and his family fall into heavy slumber. But Ali and Fatimah,

the deceased parents of those who are doomed to die for the rights of the prophet's house, can not rest tranquil in their graves. If they are powerless to avert the doom of their children, they can at least bewail their fate together. The two figures, shrouded in the cerements of the tomb, are seen and heard conversing in sepulchral accents on the stage. In spite of the difficulty of presenting such a scene, the effect is solemn and impressive. As Ali and Fatimah pass out of sight, Shemr and one of his generals appear from the hostile army to reconnoitre the camp and make plans for bringing the final assault on the morrow to a successful issue.

Death of Abbas.

The fatal battle is then presented. The resisting force is typified in the person of Abbas, who, after a terrifying din of kettle-drums and horns, bids farewell to the little group on the stage, being first invested with a white mantle thrown over his shoulders by Hossein. Immediately on mounting his charger, Abbas encounters a numerous troop of Arabs, who fiercely drive him around the stage until he disappears for a moment in the lobbies, followed by the enemy. On reappearing he presents the appearance of having been in a severe conflict; one of his arms seems to be hewn off, and his raiment is reeking with blood. Again the enemy pursue him; when he once more appears on the scene both arms are gone, and with drooping form he barely sustains himself on the saddle of his well-trained steed, which also moves with limp and feeble step. When

Abbas reaches the camp, he is lifted by wailing friends from the saddle, and helpless and dying falls on the sand. As the enemy swarm on the scene and Shemr raises his glittering scimitar to hew off the head of the prostrate warrior, an extraordinary wail of anguish bursts with one accord from the vast audience.

But the Shah arises to depart, and the scene is closed. The wounded man springs to his feet; the uplifted sword is sheathed, and with a great tumult the audience surges toward the avenues of exit. Many of the women, however, will not leave until forced to move by the ushers, so anxious are they to retain their places for the performance of the evening. To the women of Teheran the *Tazieh* is the one great event of the year. They go early in the morning of each day, and patiently wait for many a long hour for the entertainment to begin.

A Night Performance.

On each of the ten days during which the *Tazieh* is represented at the royal theatre there are two performances, one in the afternoon and one in the evening. At the latter the audience is usually larger, and the immense interior is brilliant with the light of several thousand candles gleaming through colored globes.

The episodes of the drama were not less interesting and well rendered. The performance was intended to represent the heroism of Muchtar, the avenger, and his final triumph over Obeid-Ullah, the immediate instigator of the slaughter of Hossein. Muchtar was one of the most fanatical adherents to the cause of Ali and

a firm believer in the rights of his adherents. He vowed to exterminate all who had been concerned in the death of Hossein, slaying all the leaders in that great tragedy, besides a vast number slain in battle, and a still greater multitude in cold blood.

Obeid-Ullah.

The first scene presented Obeid-Ullah seated in lordly fashion on his divan, insolently exulting that at last the difficult task assigned him by his master, Yezeed, was accomplished. The tidings had been brought him by a swift messenger that Hossein had perished, and the house of Moaviyeh was now firmly established on the throne, its foundations cemented by the blood of the descendants of Mohammed. Soon a monotonous beat of bells was heard, and camels appeared, bearing Zeineb and the children who had been spared from the slaughter, preceded by slaves carrying the heads of Hossein, Abbas and the other heroes who had sacrificed their lives. Obeid-Ullah smote the head of Hossein, and received the captives with haughty disdain. But Zeineb replied with the reckless eloquence of despair, defying him to complete his deeds of blood by murdering the remaining descendants of Ali who were now in his power.

With singular magnanimity the ferocious satrap forbore to take the frantic heroine at her word, but ordered his guards to execute Moslemeh, a man of Cufa, whose eyes had been put out for adhering to the cause of Ali. Moslemeh, led by his little child, appeared before

Obeid-Ullah, once more to curse him for his cruelties and crimes. The child shielded his father as best he could from the executioners who sought to hew him down, but at last a fatal thrust, intended for the father, felled the faithful boy to the earth. Moslemeh, now without a guide, sought the child, calling for him in moving accents, until, in his wild groping, he stumbled on the lifeless form. He stooped down, and with intense anxiety felt the corpse from head to foot; and when the terrible truth fairly burst on him, he gave an agonizing cry and fell across the bosom of his child.

Muchtar, the Avenger.

But now came the hour for retribution. Muchtar, the avenger, appears on the scene, entering the stage with majestic strides and stentorian tones. His armed retainers drag Obeid-Ullah from the seat of power, and with contumely and abuse, hurry him to execution, together with his chief adherents. In this part of the play it is reported that two men were actually hanged by ropes suspended from the dome above, another was beheaded, while a cauldron was prepared for the boiling of a third. But at this moment it was found that the Shah had left for his palace, and the performance came to an abrupt termination, just in time to save a poor man from a terrible fate. It was noticeable, however, that the men who had been executed proved to be very lively corpses at the close of the entertainment, retiring from the stage with very limber steps, considering their narrow escape.

By the seventh or eighth day of the *Tazieh,* as the entertainment is drawing to a close, the popular anxiety to see it increases with each performance, and long before the opening of the play the doors are closed, the building being packed to its utmost capacity. Outside a crowd is surging back and forth, anxiously waiting for a chance to gain admittance within the huge iron-bound portals. To none but men of high rank would these doors now be opened, and then only after beating the gates for several minutes and shouting to the porters within to swing a door open for them to pass. But this is no easy operation, for the tumultuous masses have now become so obstreperous that the porters are obliged to slam to the gate instantly, and thus there is imminent danger of being squeezed to death, an accident which has repeatedly happened on the last days of the *Tazieh.* Sometimes an elephant is used to push the crowd backward, and by slipping past his mighty bulk, as the door opens for his egress, a few venturesome spirits may force their way into the building.

Each performance opens with the processions already described. The regular recurrence of the funeral music and bands of mourners with each act of the drama, while somewhat monotonous, serves to keep before the mind of the spectators that this drama is not a mere spectacle to entertain, but a great commemorative representation, intended to keep alive the events on which the religion is founded, that has given vitality to the national life of Persia for a thousand years. The concluding performances are designed with consummate art, and are admirably adapted to the character

of the audience. While some of the details might seem to us grotesquely absurd, yet the general arrangement is well conceived with a view to divert the attention of the audience, to sustain the interest by appealing to a variety of emotions, and thus gradually leading up to the profound and overpowering emotion evoked by the closing scenes of the drama.

King Solomon.

King Suleiman, or Solomon, still holds a wide repute throughout the East for his marvelous wisdom, his skill in dealing with the mysteries of nature, and the imperial dominion he exerted over the genii and demons of the unseen world. The belief in the magic power of Solomon, of which we have so many stories in the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments* and the legends of Europe in the dark ages, still obtains in Persia. And Solomon it was, in all his glory, who was now represented in the *Tazieh*. The poetic fancy of the Persian dramatist has no difficulty in bringing Solomon into the play. The great king was so versed in prevision, or second sight, that it is claimed he was master not only of the past, but also of the future. Thus it was no extraordinary exercise of power for his eye to pierce fifteen centuries into the future and descry the events that were to transpire on the sands of Arabia ages after he and his glory had departed from earth. Therefore comes the mighty Suleiman, radiating power from his throne. As evidence of his influence over the genii and all created things, he summons before him demons and

QUEEN OF SHEBA BEFORE SOLOMON

After an original painting by A. D. Rahn

Solomon received the queen of Sheba with

for the queen's visit to the king was with an
matrimony.

SCENE FROM A PE

djinns, lions and tigers, crocodiles and all creeping things. From every side they invade the arena and make their obeisance to the great king. It must be admitted that many of them were not strictly shaped after correct models, and indicated only moderate acquaintance with natural history or the mechanics of imitation.

The Queen of Sheba.

After giving this exhibition of his power, Solomon next prepared to receive the queen of Sheba, with a pomp suitable to the rank of the high contracting parties, for according to Oriental legend the queen's visit to the king was with an eye to matrimony. This scene gave a tolerably exact representation of the marriage ceremonies of an Eastern court. First came a train of camels, gay with elaborate housings; strings of bells jangled on the necks of these stately animals, and tufts of crimson and blue waved on their lofty heads as they marched majestically around the arena with velvet tread. The effects of the princess, inclosed in iron-bound chests, were carried by the camels and a train of richly caparisoned sumpter mules. A troop of horsemen, magnificently mounted, represented the military escort of the queen, who appeared in truly royal state, seated with her maidens in a houdah of crimson and gold, borne on the back of an elephant. This entire procession, including scores of animals, passed around the arena so close to the densely packed masses of women that the sides of the great beasts sometimes touched their garments; but no one was injured or even showed alarm. Very re-

markable was the intelligence of these animals, which seemed to enter fully into the spirit of the occasion, and while sometimes showing a little sportiveness, exhibited no inclination to viciousness.

The queen of Sheba having arrived in the presence of Solomon, with all the pomp befitting the grandeur of both, the king again makes an exhibition of his necromantic skill by placing before the audience a scene which represented the marriage of Khassim, the son of Hasan, an event which had occurred the day previous to the final attack on the camp. Hossein foresaw that he and the larger part of his band were about to be destroyed, and there was danger that the house of Ali might become extinct unless measures were taken to prevent it. Presuming that the younger members of his company would be spared when the general slaughter occurred, Hossein was anxious to insure the preservation of the family while he was yet alive. It was therefore agreed that the two branches should be united in marriage without delay; and it was arranged that Khassim, the youthful son of the murdered Hasan, and Rudabeh, the daughter of Hossein, should be married that very day. The event was one of remarkable interest, owing to the extraordinary circumstances which attended it, and also of great importance in the history of Islamism, and especially of the sect of the Shiahs. It gave to the Shiahs nine holy Imams, the great dynasty of the Sefaveans, which carried Persia to an exalted pinnacle of power and splendor, and also a great multitude of Seyeds, or descendants of the prophet, whose green turbans are now seen throughout the Orient.

The preliminary colloquy of Zeineb, the sister of Hossein, of Leila, the mother of Khassim, and of the young bridegroom himself, was of the most affecting and impassioned character. The knowledge of what the morrow would bring gave peculiar solemnity to what, under other circumstances, would have been an occasion of festivity and joy. The two women gave vent to vehement exclamations of sorrow, while the youthful bridegroom, in the most pathetic accents, bewailed the approaching doom of his house and the terrible scenes that would follow his marriage. His eloquence was extraordinary for one so young. In due time the bride appeared at his tent-door, carried in a covered litter on the back of a camel led by Arab warriors of the desert. When she entered on the scene her bridegroom clasped her, weeping, in his arms, while the women also wept over them with heart-rending cries; and Hossein, aroused from his stupor of despair, joined in profound but majestic lamentations. A great wave of emotion now swept over the audience, and for several moments came from thousands of spectators an awful sound of mingled rage and mourning. Selecting this crisis as a suitable time for closing the performance of the day, the Shah arose to depart, and immediately the audience dispersed.

Final Scenes of the Tazieh

To the final scenes of the *Tazieh* Christians are not invited; for the events then presented are of too solemn a nature for the profane eyes of unbelievers. On the

last day especially it is not considered safe for foreigners to be seen in the building by the people, for then the murder of Hossein is consummated with a vividness which arouses the audience to the last pitch of agitation, and it is impossible to foretell what might then occur if some excited devotee should take umbrage at the sight of an infidel. While there is now an evident tendency to moderate the excess of the *Tazieh*, actors, carried away by the excitement of the closing scenes, have been known to sacrifice their lives. An incident previous to the final act, and one of annual occurrence is the demand for the release of a prominent criminal—the request being made to the Shah himself by townsmen of the prisoner. The crowd of armed fanatics is so clamorous and peremptory that the Shah finds it expedient to yield, and sends an order for the release of the prisoner. During the last few days of the Moharrem it is also common for the rabble to go to the prisons and insist on the release of criminals, whom they demand by name. In order to prevent the storming of the prison, and save his own life, the jailer is forced to yield, and on one occasion sixty-five men were thus set at liberty. So well established is this custom that the authorities dare not, as yet, interfere to prevent it, although the progressive spirit now apparent will undoubtedly check it before many years. Fortunately for the credit of the government and the well-being of society, means are taken to track and recapture these men immediately after the excitement has subsided.

Apart from the excesses which have sprung out of

the Moharrem celebration, there is much to admire in the *Tazieh*. As a manifestation of the sentiments of a great religious sect, it merits respectful attention, and is also most interesting as an exhibition of the dramatic genius of the Persian race. It seems reasonable to infer that a decided talent for the drama exists in Persia, which only requires toleration and encouragement from the laws and customs of the country to reach a high degree of excellence.

Persian Comedy.

It is a well-established fact in the history of literature that poetry in every nation precedes prose; so likewise in the particular department of the drama, tragedy precedes comedy. In Persia tragedy, as seen in the Passion-play, is hardly a century old, though the annual memorial services out of which it has grown can be traced back to the twelfth century. While the religious leaders have fostered this new development of the national genius, they have resolutely suppressed attempts at general depiction of life and manner. Yet, as is abundantly attested by the popular lyrics of Hafiz and the astronomer-poet, Omar Khayyam, a free-thinking spirit is widely spread among the cultured classes. In recent years closer contact with foreigners has led to the importation of translations of comedies from the Turkish in which various striking features of Mohammedan life have been presented, and these translations have naturally been followed by adaptations which attract large audiences in the cities, though the respect-

able classes hold aloof. While even yet the great religious dramas are not printed and published as literature, but are held in reserve by the stage-directors and theatrical authorities, the new comedies, being shorter, have occasionally been printed and thus form a regular part of modern Persian literature. They are eagerly sought by foreigners who for any reason wish to obtain direct acquaintance with the vernacular of to-day. It it not improbable that ere long some genius, disregarding the conventions which would hamper his action, will, by giving life-like pictures of the humorous aspects of Persian society, raise comedy to a recognized position in the national literature.

Dramatic Festivals in Tibet.

Tibet, the elevated plateau north of the Himalaya mountains, is probably of all lands the least known to Western civilized nations. The mysterious gloom which for centuries has hung over this region is owing, first, to the difficulty of access, as it can be reached only by scaling formidable mountain ranges; secondly, to its Arctic climate, due to its elevation of 10,000 to 15,000 feet above the sea-level, and, lastly, to the rigorous exclusion of foreigners by the Buddhist lamas who exercise absolute authority over the people. Tibet is indeed the stronghold of Buddhism, which, however, has there, in the course of centuries, taken a form widely different from that of its original, now banished from India, the place of its birth. The few European travellers who have penetrated this obscure country have uni-

formly reported a striking external resemblance between Buddhist ceremonies and practices as there observed and those of Roman Catholic countries. No sufficient explanation of this remarkable fact has ever been given. Too little is known of the past history of the Tibetan people and their religion to afford a sure foundation for any theory.

It is impossible to decide whether the observance of the spring and autumn festivals which are every year conducted at the principal monasteries in this strange land were introduced by the Buddhists, or whether they are inherited from the Shamans, or priest-magicians of the Tartars, to which race the people evidently belong. It is more probable, however, that they were of popular origin, and have been accepted and modified by the Buddhist priests and monks, who now conduct these exhibitions of a more or less dramatic nature.

The singular theatre of which we give a view was erected at Himis, a cloister on the plateau, 12,000 feet above the sea. It is two days' journey from Leh, the chief city of Ladak, and nine days' journey from Srinaygar, in Cashmere in northern India. Himis is close to the caravan route from India to China. Its cloister is inferior to that of the Grand Lama at Lhassa, the capital of Tibet. Yet it is an important seminary of Buddhist priests, who are here trained in strict seclusion for their vocation as upholders of that mystical religion.

Twice in the year the routine of their studies and devotions is interrupted by the great festivals. Then the people of the surrounding districts for more than a

hundred miles assemble to witness the customary plays. The inmates of the cloister come forth, arrayed in fantastic robes of glaring colors, many of them disguised with heads of bulls and other animals, and some with hideous devil-masks. They bear in their hands staves with little skulls, two-edged swords and strangely-formed musical instruments. The whole procession is as grotesque as only the Orient under the influence of the grossest superstition and religious fanaticism can make it.

Weird dances and dramatic representations follow, which may perhaps signify the contest between the giant forces of Nature at the critical seasons of the year —spring and autumn. The background of this strange play is well suited to the performance. The long corridors of the cloister with the grotesque and costly carvings of Buddhist artists, the heavy gilding of the ornaments, the curving roofs, the statues of Buddha, half enveloped in the incense smoke of the chapels, and beyond these the grand views of the surrounding mountains. The festival lasts for two days, from early morning till late at night. The great gongs with copper clappers are set ringing with their strangely muffled vibrations. Silver trumpets, eight feet long, supply a shrill accompaniment. The terrible din has a nerve-rending effect on European ears. Sharp gusts of wind drive the snow over the mountain passes, and the pilgrims, shivering with cold, muffle themselves in their furs and wraps. Many women and girls are noticeable by their costly robes and head-dresses, set with gold and precious stones. At the end of the play the pil-

grims depart; the monks return to their devotions, and after the autumn exhibition the region under its deep covering of snow takes more and more the semblance of death.

Other Oriental Nations.

Except in China and Japan, India and Persia, there are no traces of a native drama among the civilized nations of Asia, such forms as exist here and there being borrowed from other nations, as in Siam, where plays have been freely adapted from the dramatic literature of the Hindoos. Though the Bible contains strong dramatic elements, the drama was entirely unknown to the Hebrews throughout their existence as a nation, albeit they are among the best patrons of the theatre in countries where they have made their home. Other nations, and especially the Assyrians, although they knew not the drama, have produced epic and lyric poetry which is intensely dramatic in character.

To the Egyptians the drama was also unknown, though their civilization and religious ideas exercised a most potent influence on the creeds and culture of the Greeks. While it cannot be definitely ascertained how much the Greeks were indebted to the Egyptians in various branches of knowledge, it is certain that the former confessed themselves the disciples of the latter in the cardinal principles of their natural theology. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul found in Egypt its most solemn expression in mysterious recitations connected with the rites of sepulture, and treating of

the migration of the soul from its earthly to its eternal abode. The ideas to which they sought to give utterance centred in the worship of Osiris, as the vivifying power, or universal soul of nature. The same deity was also honored by processions among the rural dictricts of Egypt, and, according to Herodotus, these closely resembled, except for the absence of choruses, the Hellenic processions in honor of the wine-god Dionysus.

The Egyptians regarded music as one of the most important of the sciences. Though it was not, as among the Greeks, a part of their system of education, it was diligently studied by their priests, and in the sacred rites of their gods the flute and harp were freely used, in addition to vocal music. Dancing was almost restricted to professional performers; but while the higher orders abstained from it, the lower classes indulged in it on festive occasions. At such times pantomime was a favorite amusement, frequently accompanied with license and gross buffoonery, as at the early rustic festivals of the Greeks and Italians.

The Book of Job.

Reference has before been made to the *Book of Job*, which some critics have declared to be in the nature of a drama, though by most writers it has been pronounced a parable, with perhaps a foundation of fact. We may notice a few of its more prominent features, and first of all see how they correspond with the rules laid down by ancient critics. Aristotle declares that in tragedy the action should be grand, pathetic

and entire, meaning by the word grand that it should relate to exalted personages. This first condition is certainly fulfilled in the *Book of Job;* for it deals with angels, with Satan, and with God himself. It is also eminently pathetic, for we see "a just and upright man," for no fault of his own, deprived of his possessions and children, and sitting in a state of perfect desolation; so that a more affecting picture was never drawn. It is entire, according to the strictest sense; for it commences with the misfortunes of Job, is occupied by and terminates with them, the first twelve verses of the first chapter answering to the prologue of the Greek tragedies.

The style is intensely dramatic, differing in this respect from other canonical writings. It is, throughout, firm, equable, and polished; often sublime, and never low. Violent hyperboles are not to be admitted in tragedy, and here the just medium is preserved, and in so many long speeches it never, for a single sentence, fails. It is well adapted to the actors, who, being Asiatics, use more swelling phrases than Europeans; for what is tumid to us would be flat with them. The metaphors and similes are peculiarly fit for an Arabian to use, and at the same time intelligible to all nations. The descriptions of the leviathan and behemoth are terrifically grand. Several other descriptions are essentially dramatic and poetical.

The dominating passion of grief affords as good a substratum for a tragedy as terror or horror, and is undoubtedly better for a moral purpose, other passions being introduced, but so carefully as not to draw our

attention for a moment from the principal motive. The characters are finely drawn, Job being the central figure, while Elihu and the three friends are slightly but correctly sketched. Satan is delineated according to Asiatic ideas, which made of him rather an officer than an enemy of the Almighty.

On the other side the connection of speeches by narrative in the *Book of Job* seems to entitle it to be classed with epic rather than dramatic poetry. Yet the learned John Owen, in his remarkable book, *The Five Great Sceptical Dramas of History*, places the *Book of Job* at the head of the list, the other four being the *Prometheus* of Æschylus, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Calderon's *Wonder-working Magician* and Goethe's *Faust*.

In calling these works "sceptical dramas" the author means that in them the divine government of human affairs, in its distribution of good and evil among the righteous and the wicked, is severely challenged, whatever may be the answer suggested in each case, whether the dramatist finally aims to justify the ways of God to man or not, or whether he has in any manner solved or attempted to solve the problems he has presented.

Arabian Literature.

Another great literature remains to be considered—the literature of Arabia, whose language has been widely diffused by the triumphs of the religion of Mohammed. It may first be remarked that, while the Arabians have neither epic nor dramatic poetry, in our own sense of the word, they have that which is nearly

related to the epic, and which, among themselves, takes the place of the drama. They have been inexhaustible in love-poems, in elegies on the death of their heroes, or of their beauties, in moral verses, among which their fables may be reckoned, in eulogistic, satirical, descriptive, and above all, didactic poems. But, among all their works, there is not a single epic, comedy or tragedy.

In their different branches of poetry the Arabians display a surprising subtlety and great refinement of thought. Their style of expression is graceful and elegant, their sentiments are noble, and, if we may credit Oriental scholars, there prevails, in the original language, a harmony in the verses, a propriety in the expression, and a grace throughout, which are necessarily lost in a translation. But it cannot escape us that the fame of these lyric compositions rests, in some degree, on their bold metaphors, their extravagant allegories, and their excessive hyperboles. It may justly be asserted that the strongest characteristic of Oriental taste is an abuse of the imagination and of the intellect. The Arabs despised the poetry of the Greeks, which to them appeared timid, cold, and constrained; and, among all the books which, with almost a superstitious veneration, they borrowed from that people, there is hardly a single poem. None of those relics of classical genius were adjudged worthy of a translation, and neither Homer nor Sophocles, nor Pindar, was allowed to enter into a comparison with their own poets. The aim of the Arabian poets was always to make brilliant use of the boldest and most gigantic images. They sought

to astonish, neglected natural sentiment, and made an exhibition of art; and the more the ornaments of art were multiplied, the more admirable in their eyes did their work appear. On this account they were perpetually seeking for difficulties to vanquish, though these added neither to the development of the idea nor to the harmony of the verse.

To those nations which attained a classical poetry, the imitation of nature had discovered the use of the epic and the drama, in which the poet endeavors to express the true language of the human heart. The people of Arabia never made this attempt. Their poetry is entirely lyric. It ought, indeed, to bear a character of inspiration, to justify it in rising so far above the common language of nature. Under whatever name it be known, and to whatever rules it has been subjected, it will always be found to be the language of the passions.

But, if the Arabians possess neither the epic nor the drama, they have been, on the other hand, the inventors of a style of verse and poetic prose which is related to the epic, and which far surpasses in interest the average drama, serving, moreover, as the basis for many a romantic play. We owe to them those wondrous tales of which the conception is so brilliant, and the imagination so rich and so varied; tales which have been the delight of our infancy, and which at a more advanced age we never read without feeling their enchantments anew. Everyone is acquainted with the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments;* but the common translation comprises only a small part of the great Arabian collection. This prodigious collection is not confined merely to books, but

forms the treasure of a numerous class of men and women, who, throughout the whole extent of the Mohammedan dominion, in Turkey, Persia, and even to the extremity of India, find a livelihood in reciting these stories to crowds that delight to forget, in the pleasing dreams of imagination, the cares and troubles of the present moment. In the coffee-houses of the Levant, one of these men will gather around him a silent crowd, which listens to his tale more eagerly than we hang upon the words of a favorite actor. Sometimes he will excite terror or pity, but more frequently he pictures to his audience those brilliant and fantastic visions which are the patrimony of Eastern imaginations. At times he will provoke laughter, and it is only on such occasions that the brows of the fierce Mussulman will unbend. This is the exhibition which, throughout the Levant, supplies the place of our dramatic representations. The public squares abound with these story-tellers, and they are often summoned to the seraglio. Even the physician frequently recommends them to his patients, in order to soothe pain, to calm agitation, or to produce sleep after long watchfulness; and accustomed to sickness, they modulate their voices, soften their tones, and gently suspend them as sleep steals over the sufferer.

To the Arabs their poets and story-tellers are what the rhapsodists were to the ancient Greeks; not that they copied or imitated the Greeks, whose poetry, as we have seen, with its chaste, classic style, seemed to them frigid and artificial. Every year their leading poets met at the feast of Okad, not only to recite their

compositions, but to receive the reward, which consisted not merely of applause but of more substantial recognition. In early days much of their verse consisted of eulogies of chieftains, rulers and distinguished men, and for a single ode, or "kassedah" as it was called, a hundred camels or several thousand gold pieces were no uncommon donation. Each poet, or at least each one of the higher class, had his personal patron, through whose generosity was furnished the remuneration that is now expected from the press, while publicity was given to a few chosen works of genius by the custom of suspending in some place of public resort such pieces as, at the annual gatherings of Okad had won the palm allotted for the highest excellence. Seven of these, known in Arabian literature by the title of Múallakat, or "Suspended," as being emphatically the best of their kind, and all belonging to the sixth century, became for succeeding ages the accepted and classical standards for Arab poetical composition.

Of prose, up to the time of Mahomet's succession, there was absolutely none, and even the most eloquent of speeches were never embodied in writing. The irregular half-rhyming sentences of the Koran were the first attempt at prose, which afterward came into general use, and was presently applied to history, biography, romance, philosophical treatises and subjects of every description.

The imagination of the Arabs, which in their stories shines in all its brilliancy, is easily distinguished from that of the chivalric nations, though it is easy to perceive a certain resemblance between them. The supernatural

world is the same in both, but the moral world is different. The Arabian tales, like the romances of chivalry, convey us into fairy realms, but the human personages whom they introduce are very dissimilar. These tales had their birth after the Arabians, yielding the empire of the sword to the Tartars, the Turks, and the Persians, had devoted themselves to commerce and the arts. We recognize in them the style of a mercantile people, as we do that of a warlike nation in the romances of chivalry. Riches and artificial luxuries dispute the palm with the splendid gifts of the fairies. The heroes unceasingly traverse distant realms, and the interests of merchandise excite their active curiosity as much as the love of renown awakened the spirit of the ancient knights. Besides the female characters we find only four distinct classes of person—princes, merchants, monks or calenders, and slaves. Soldiers are seldom introduced. Valor and military achievements inspire terror and produce the most desolating effects, but excite no enthusiasm. There is, on this account, in the Arabian tales, something less noble and heroic than we usually expect in compositions of this nature. But, on the other hand, we must consider that these story-tellers are our superiors in the art of producing, sustaining and unceasingly varying the interest of this kind of fiction; that they are the creators of that brilliant mythology of fairies and genii which extends the bounds of the world, multiplies the riches and the strength of human nature, and which, without striking us with terror, carries us into the realms of marvels and prodigies. It is from them that we have derived that intoxication of

love, that tenderness and delicacy of sentiment, and that reverential awe of women, which have operated so powerfully on our chivalrous feelings. We trace their effects in all the literature of Southern Europe, which owes to this cause much of its mental character. Many of these tales had found their way into our poetry long before the translation of the *Arabian Nights*. Some of them are to be met with in the old French fabliaux, in Boccaccio and in Ariosto, and the same stories which have charmed our infancy, passing from tongue to tongue, and from nation to nation, through channels frequently unknown, are now familiar to the memory, and delight the imagination of the civilized world.

THE DEATH-STONE.

(*Translated from the Japanese under the auspices of Mr. W. G. Aston, of H. B. M.'s Legation, Yedo.*)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE SPIRIT OF THE "FLAWLESS JEWEL MAIDEN."

THE BUDDHIST PRIEST GEN-O.

THE CHORUS.

Prelude.

The *Death-stone* belongs to the older school of the Japanese classic drama. The Buddhist priest Gen-o, in his religious pilgrimage, has come to a rock whose shade seems to invite him to repose. But a spirit in the guise of a young woman warns him not to risk the danger of death. He inquires the reason, and she tells him that this is the famous Death-stone of the moor of Nasu. Then she relates the story of the "Flawless Jewel Maiden" and later acknowledges that she is the spirit of that maiden, now doomed to abide in that place. The chief attraction to the aristocratic Japanese in this play is its refined language and the soothing cadences of the chant of the chorus, which echoes and emphasizes the story of the genius of the place.

Priest.—What though the vapors of the fleeting scene
Obscure the view of pilgrims here below;
With heart intent on heav'nly things unseen,
I take my journey through this world of woe.

I am a priest, and Gen-o is my name. With a heart ever fixed on the path of wisdom, I had long groaned over the imperfection of my spiritual insight. But now I see clear, and, with the sacerdotal besom, I shall sweep the cobwebs from the eyes of men. After sojourning in the province of Michinoku, I would now fain turn my steps towards the capital, and there

pass the winter season of meditation. I have crossed the river Shirakawa, and have arrived at the moor of Nasu, in the Province of Shimotsuké.

Alas! the vapors of the fleeting scene
Obscure the view of pilgrims here below;
Strike out the hope in heav'nly things unseen,
What guide were left us through this world of woe?

Spirit.—Rest not under the shadow of this stone!

Priest.—Wherefore not? Is there any reason for not resting under the shadow of this stone?

Spirit.—Yes; this is the Death-stone of the moor of Nasu; and not men only, but birds even and beasts perish if they approach it.

Needs there my warning? Hast thou not heard tell
Of Nasu's Death-stone, and its fatal spell?
I entreat thee, depart!

Priest.—What is it that maketh this stone so eager to take life?

Spirit.—It is that into it, in the olden time, entered the spirit of her who was called the "Flawless Jewel Maiden," concubine to the Emperor Toba-no-in.

Priest.—Into this stone? on this far-distant road?
Methought Kiyoto was in the girl's abode.

Spirit.—Verily, it is because there is a reason for this that the story hath been handed down from the olden time.

Priest.—Thy words and thine appearance seem to tell me that thou knowest this story.

Spirit.—No! no! I know it but in outline. Fleeting as the dew is the memory of the maiden's fate.

Erst through the King's abode,
Proudly the maiden strode,
But on this desolate road,
Now doom'd to dwell,
Crime upon crime she heaps,
Vainly the pilgrim weeps,
Cursing with dying lips,
The fatal spell!

Chorus.—The Death-stone stands on Nasu's moor.
Through winter snows and summer heat;
The moss grows grey upon its sides,
But the foul demon haunts it yet.
Chill blows the blast: the owl's sad choir
Hoots hoarsely through the moaning pines;
Among the low chrysanthemums
The skulking fox, the jackal whines.
Fair was the girl,—beyond expression fair;
But what her country, who her parents were
None knew. It seems as if the misty space
Beyond the clouds must be the native place
Of one who, soon as shown to mortal sight,
Ascended straightway to the cloudy height.
For not in vain were beauty's charms display'd
Before th' Imperial eyes: so fair a maid
Was surely born to share a monarch's bed.

Spirit.—Once did the Emperor's Majesty see fit
To put to proof the lovely damsel's wit.

Cho.—Nor did she fail in aught: the sacred text
Which guides our steps through this world to the next,
The Chinese classics, too, Confucian lore,
Japan's sweet poets of the days of yore,—
She knew them all, nor was it all she knew,
For she herself was bard and seer too.

Spirit.—A mind so flawless in a form so fair
Deserved the name her lord then gave to her.

Cho.—Once the Mikado made a splendid feast
At the cool summer-palace: every guest
That of accomplishments or wit could boast
Was bidden there—a gay and brilliant host,
Like to the clouds, from out whose fleecy sphere
Th' Imperial kindred, like the moon, shone clear.
But hark! what rumor mingles with the strains
Of sweetest music? see! the heav'nly plains
Are wrapp'd in inky darkness. Not a star—
The moon not risen yet: but from afar,
Heralded by the rustling of the shower,
The storm comes howling through the festive bower.

The lanterns are blown out: "A light! a light!"
Cry all at once; but from the pitchy night
No answer comes to soothe their anxious fright.
But lo! from out the "Jewel Maiden's" frame
There's seen to dart a weirdly lustrous flame!
It grows, it spreads, it fills th' Imperial halls:
The painted screens, the gilt and damask'd walls.
The very trees, erst plung'd in blackest night,
Sparkle and glitter in the lurid light.

Spirit.—That hour the fiend's foul witchcraft was revealed.

Cho.—That hour the fiend's foul witchcraft was revealed.

The subtle venom noiselessly instilled
Into her lordly lover's pearly frame
Prey'd on his vitals like a burning flame.
Then spake the Court Magician: "Without doubt
That harlot is the culprit: cast her out!
Drive her away! Seest not the impish plan
Laid to destroy thy crown and Great Japan?"
Resentment dire then fills th' Imperial breast:
He now hates most what once he loved the best.
Driven with curses from the monarch's door,
The witch now haunts this drear and distant moor.

Priest.—Thou hast deigned to tell me this long history—who art thou?

Spirit.—Wherefore any longer conceal it? The demon that of old dwelt in the breast of the "Flawless Jewel Maiden," and that now inhabits the Death-stone of the moor of Nasu, is none other than myself.

Priest.—Speakest thou truly? Well! well! it is the soul sunk lowest in the depths of wickedness that rises highest on the pinnacle of virtue.

I will bestow on thee the priestly robe and begging-bowl. But thou must reveal thyself to mine eyes in thy proper shape.

Spirit.—Alas! what sorrow and confusion!

In the garish light of day
My body fades away,
  Like Mount Asama's fires:
With the night I'll come again,

Confess my sins with pain
And new-born pure desires.

Cho.—Dark will be the night:
But her red lustrous light
Ne'er needs the moon.
Wait! fear not! she cries,
Watch on with trusting eyes:
My hour'll come soon.

(The Spirit vanishes into the Stone.)

Priest.—'Tis said of stocks and stones: they have no soul. Yet, what signifieth the text: "Herbs and trees, stones and rocks, shall all enter into Nirvana," save that from the beginning a divine essence dwelt within them? No! if I bestow on this demon the sacerdotal robe and bowl, who can doubt but that for it, too, Nirvana will throw open its gates? Therefore, with offerings of flowers and of fragrant incense, I recite the Scriptures with my face turned towards the stone, and I exorcise it thus:

Spirit of the Death-stone! I conjure thee: whence comest thou?
Why cumberest thou the earth?
Tarry not! reveal thyself! reveal thyself!
E'en for such as thee mine intercessions shall cause Nirvana to fling open its gates.
E'en such as thou shalt put on the majesty of a god.
Hear me! hear me!

(The Stone is rent asunder, and the Demon issues from it.)

Spirit.—In stones there are spirits:
In the waters is a voice heard:
The winds blow across the firmament!

Cho.—Oh! horror! horror!
The Death-stone's rent in twain;
The Demon stands revealed!

Priest.—Oh! horror! horror!
The Death-stone's rent in twain:

O'er moor and field
A lurid glare
Burns fierce. There stands revealed
A fox—and yet again
The phantom seems to wear
The aspect of a maiden fair!

Spirit.—No more the mystery can be concealed.

I am she, who first, in Ind, was the demon to whom Prince Han-zoku paid homage at the murderous mound. In Great Cathay, I took the form of Ho-ji, consort of the Emperor Yu-o; and at the Court of the Rising Sun I was the "Flawless Jewel Maiden," concubine to the Emperor Toba-no-In.

Intent on the destruction of the crown and empire of Japan, I assumed the shape of a fair maiden, whose presence caused the Imperial person to languish in disease. Already was I exulting in the thought of sending him to the grave, when Abé-no-Yasunari, the Court Magician, directed against me his powers of exorcism; he set up the many-colored symbols of the gods upon the altar, and gave them also into my hands.

Cho.—With fervent zeal the Great Magician prays:
The Demon hears with tremulous amaze
The solemn exorcism, whose every word
Pierces her spirit like a two-edged sword.
Not long such pain and terror can be borne:
Awed into silence, and with anguish torn,
She spreads her wings, she rises on the wind,
Nor dares to cast one fearful glance behind.
Away! away! o'er lands and seas she soars,
Nor rests until she gains these distant moors.

Spirit.—Then the Mikado issued his commands.
To the two satraps of the neighb'ring lands:
"Drive out," spake he, "the Fox, the Demon foul!"
And they, obedient to the word, enroll
Skilled marksmen, who, for five-score days and more,
Practice on dogs, to make their arch'ry sure.
May we not thus trace back to that command
The custom of dog-shooting in our land?

Then the two satraps, armed with bow and spear,
And myriad horsemen brought from far and near,
Beat all the moor, surround its every part;
Thick as the hail-storm fly the spear and dart.
And I, poor Fox, all hope of rescue flown,
Wounded and dying on the heath sink down.
But yet my ghost (though, like the morning dew,
'Twas wrapt away from grosser human view)
Ceas'd not to haunt this distant, des'late moor,
And in the Death-stone dwelt its fatal power,
Which, ever watchful, both by day and night,
In murd'ring weary wand'rers took delight—
Till thou, Great Buddha, send'st thy priest this way.
Then did religion reassert her sway,
Breaking my chains asunder, and the spell
Which bound me captive to the powers of hell:
"I swear, O man of God, I swear," she cries,
"To thee whose blessing wafts me to the skies,
I swear a solemn oath, that shall endure
Firm as the Death-stone standing on the moor,
That from this hour I'm God's for e'er and e'er!"
She spake and vanished into thinnest air.

The *Death-stone* is one of the very few works of a popular character which belong to the ancient literature of Japan. Almost everything extant belonging to that literature was written for the learned circles around the court, and thus was adapted only to the minds of the cultured classes. Later, beginning, perhaps, with the twelfth century, when the learned devoted themselves chiefly to the study of Chinese, the cultivation of the Japanese language was in a great measure abandoned to the ladies of the court. A very large proportion of the best writings of the best age of Japanese literature was the work of women, and the names of many female

writers, especially of poetry, are quoted with admiration even at the present day.

In early times Kiôto was the principal, if not the only, seat of learning in Japan. Interminable wars and feuds kept the inhabitants of the eastern portion of the empire too fully occupied with military affairs to allow of their being able to engage in learned and peaceful pursuits, even had they so desired. But the court of the mikado at Kiôto enjoyed a far more tranquil existence, and the nobles composing that court devoted themselves with zest to the pursuit of letters. Poetry was held in the highest honor and received the greatest share of attention.

Of late years Japanese literature has received far more attention and more careful study, if we are to judge from the number of recently published works, as compared with those existing even a century ago. This is mainly due to the introduction of printing presses with movable types. Many of the old manuscripts have been set up in type and published in the modern style, so that there is no longer any great difficulty in procuring specimens of the ancient poetry and ancient drama of Japan.

RETNAVÁLI;

OR,

THE NECKLACE.

By SRI HERSHA DEVA, King of Cashmir.

(Translated from the Original Sanskrit by Horace Hayman Wilson, M.A., F.R.S.)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

VATSA—King of Kausambi.

YAUGANDARAYANA—The King's Chief Minister.

VASANTAKA—The King's Confidential Companion.

VASUBHRITI—Ambassador of the King of Sinhala.

BABHRAVYA—Envoy from Vatsa to King of Sinhala.

SAMVARANA SIDDHA—A Magician.

VIJAYA VERMA—An Officer of Vatsa's Army.

VASAVADATTA—Queen of Vatsa.

RETNAVALI or SAGARIKA—Princess of Sinhala.

KANCHANAMALA—The Queen's Attendant.

SUSANGATA—Friend of Sagarika.

NIPUNIKA,
MADANIKA,
CHUTALATIKA,
VASUNDHARA,
} *Female Attendants.*

SCENE—THE PALACE OF VATSA IN KAUSAMBI.

Prelude.

The drama here presented is valuable as a picture of Hindoo manners in a sphere of life secluded from common observation at a period at least as remote as the beginning of the twelfth century. The story is romantic, the incidents are well contrived, the situations are strongly dramatic, and the interest is skillfully maintained. The intrigue results from the combination of accidental circumstances and premeditated designs.

ACT I.

SCENE—THE PALACE OF VATSA.

Enter Yaugandaráyana.

Yaugandaráyana.—'Tis true! fate, if propitious, soon restores the absent, and from remotest isles, the wastes of ocean, and the bounds of earth, safe gives them to us again—else how chanced it that the fair daughter of the king of Lanká, whom, as directed by the seer, we had sent to obtain, and who was by her father, with rich gifts, consigned a bride to our illustrious prince, escaped annihilation? Borne on a plank, the relic of her shattered bark, a merchant of Kausámbí found her floating in mid-sea. Her costly necklace spoke her of no common rank, whence with all honor she was treated, and to our capital conveyed. Fate still smiled upon our sovereign. I have trans-

ferred the maiden to the honorable keeping of the queen; and now I hear our chamberlain, Bábhravya, and Vasubhúti, the minister of Sinhalá, who had accompanied the princess, having by some means reached the shore, are on their way hither, having been encountered by Rumanwán on his march to chastise the king of Kosalá. I have little need to fear the end of this; but faithful service ever has its cares. The elevation of my master's power is my aim, and destiny coöperates with my design—neither can the seer prophetic err. The king himself alone I doubt, for still he loves to follow where his own inclinations lead—(a noise behind). Hark! the mellow drum, accompanied with song and shouts, indicates the clamorous rejoicings of the multitude. I suspect the king has come forth to behold from his palace the frolic merriment with which his subjects celebrate the festival of Kámadeva. Ah yes, I see him on the terrace: wearied of tales of war, and seeking most his reputation in his people's hearts, he issues forth attended by his companion Vasantaka, like the flower-armed deity himself, descended to take a part in the happiness of his worshippers. I will retire to my dwelling, and meditate in tranquillity the measures best adapted to insure us a fortunate termination of the task we have begun. (Exit.)

(Vatsa Rájá, discovered seated, dressed as for the Spring festival, and attended by Vasantaka.)

Vatsa.—My friend!

Vasantaka.—Your majesty!

Vats.—I scarcely can express the content I now enjoy. My kingdom is rid of every foe, the burden of my government reposes on able shoulders, the seasons are favorable, and my subjects prosperous and happy. In the daughter of Pradyota I have a wife whom I adore, and in thee, Vasantaka, a friend in whom I can confide. Attended by thee, thus, at such a season, and so disposed, I might fancy myself the deity of desire, and this vernal celebration held in honor of myself.

Vas.—Excuse me. Since you admit me to be a part of it, I shall even claim the whole; and, so highly exalted by your regard, I shall maintain that the festival is mine. Observe the general joy. As if intoxicated with delight, the people dance

along the streets, sporting merrily with each other's persons, and mutually scattering the yellow-tinted fluid. On every side the music of the drum and the buzz of frolic crowds fill all the air. The very atmosphere is of a yellow hue, with clouds of flowery fragrance.

Vats.—Yon lofty mansion opposite to us is occupied by a merry band. I knew not that Kausámbí was so wealthy!—She outvies the residence of the god of wealth. Her numerous sons are clad in cloth of gold, sprinkled with the fragrant dust of the color of dawn, or tinted with the saffron dye, decked with glittering ornaments and tossing their heads proudly with splendid crests, fit for Káma himself. The soil, plashy with the frequent shower and tread of numerous feet, is converted into vermilion paste, as the artificial bloom is washed down from the cheeks of the máidens and mingled with the ground.

Vas.—See where a colored shower falls on a thick and struggling crowd, shrinking in vain from the mischievous pipes of those mirthful maids.

Vats.—I should compare the city to the subterranean world, where the snake gods dwell. The mischievous pipes are crested snakes—the scattering dust of yellow fragrance sheds unearthly dimness, and the gleaming tiaras dart through it such radiance as beams from the serpent jewels.

Vas.—Look, Sir, where Madaniká and Chútalatiká approach us: their gestures indicate the influence of the divinity of the season.

Enter Madaniká and Chútalatiká, two of the Queen's Attendants, dancing and singing.

Madanika.—Cool from southern mountains blowing,
Freshly swells the grateful breeze,
Round with lavish bounty throwing
Fragrance from the waving trees;
To men below and gods above,
The friendly messenger of love.

Chútalatiká.—Lightly from the green stem shaken,
Balmy flowrets scent the skies—
Warm from youthful bosoms waken

Infant passion's ardent sighs.
And many a maid around is roaming,
Anxious for her lover's coming.

Both.—Nor alone the tender blossom
Opens to the smiling day,
Lordly man's expanding bosom
Buds beneath the genial ray,
Offering to the flowery dart,
Of love, a soft and yielding heart.

Vats.—I perceive, indeed, the influence of the season expressed in their appearance. The fillet of the one is loosened, and her long tresses float dishevelled to the air: the necklace of the other seems too weighty for her languid frame, though she plies her tinkling anklets with more than wonted activity.

Vas.—I will gird up my garb and join them, shall I, in compliment to the festival?

Vats.—If you please.

Vas.—(Descends.) Come, Madaniká, teach me your poem.

Mad.—A poem, you simpleton! it is no poem.

Vas.—What is it, then?

Mad.—A ballad.

Vas.—Oh, a ballad! if that is the case, I wish you good-bye.

Mad.—You must not leave us.

Vas.—Consider my character. (They hold him and sprinkle him with yellow powder, till he breaks away.) Here I am at last, my good friend: I have been in jeopardy.

Chût.—Come, we have amused ourselves long enough; let us bear the queen's message to his majesty.

Mad.—Come on (approaching Vatsa). Glory to your majesty. So please you, the queen commands—I crave pardon, requests.

Vats.—Nay, Madaniká, you are quite correct; the queen commands, particularly at a season sacred to the god of love. What are her orders?

Mad.—She is bound to-day to offer homage to the image of

the flower-armed deity, which stands at the foot of the red asoka tree in the garden of the palace, and requests your majesty's presence at her devotions.

Vats.—You see, my friend, how one festival begets another.

Vas.—Let us go thither. I will officiate as your priest, and I hope my benediction will not be wholly unproductive.

Vats.—Go, Madaniká, and let the queen know that we shall meet her in the garden.

Mad.—As your majesty commands. (Exeunt.)

Vats.—Come, my friend, lead the way to the garden. (They descend and proceed.)

Vas.—This is the place, Sir. Behold the rich canopy of the pollen of the mango blossoms, wafted above our heads by the southern breeze, and the chorus bursts from the köils and the bees to hail your approach.

Vats.—The garden is now most lovely. The trees partake of the rapturous season—their new leaves glow like coral, their branches wave with animation in the wind, and their foliage resounds with the blithe murmurs of the bee. The bakula blossoms lie around its root like ruby wine; the champaka flowers blush with the ruddiness of youthful beauty; the bees give back in harmony the music of the anklets, ringing melodiously as the delicate feet are raised against the stem of the asoka tree.

Vas.—No, no; it is not the bees who mimic the ringing of the anklets; 'tis the queen with her train approaching.

Vats.—You are right; they are at hand. (They retire.)

Enter Vásavadattá the Queen, Kánchanamálá, Ságariká, and other damsels attending.

Vásavadattá.—Now, Kánchanamálá, where is the garden?

Kánchanamálá.—This is it, madam.

Vásava.—And where the red asoka tree, at the foot of which I am to pay offerings to Madana?

Kánch.—It is in sight. This is the mádhaví creeper, your majesty's own plant; it is now rich with blossoms. This is

the plant his majesty takes such care of, the jasmine that he expects to blossom out of season:—now we pass it, and this is the tree.

Vásava.—Very well; where are the offerings?

Ságariká.—Here, madam. (Presenting them.)

Vásava.—(Looking at her, then aside.) What carelessness! an object I have hitherto so cautiously concealed, thus heedlessly exposed: it shall be so. (Aloud.) How now, Ságariká, what make you here; where is my favorite starling that I left to your charge, and whom it seems you have quitted for this ceremony? Away! deliver the oblations to Kánchanamálá, and return.

Ságar.—As your majesty pleases. (Gives the offerings and withdraws to a short distance.) The bird is safe with my friend Susangatá. I should like to witness the ceremony. I wonder if Ananga is worshipped here as in my father's mansion! I will keep myself concealed amongst these shrubs and watch them, and for my own presentation to the deity I will go cull a few of these flowers. (Retires.)

Vásava.—Now, place the divine Pradyumna at the foot of the tree.

Kánch.—(Arranges the offering.) It is done, madam.

Vats.—Come, Vasantaka, they are ready; let us join them. The queen stands by the side of the god of the fish-emblazoned banner, as slight and graceful as his own bow, and as delicate as the flowers that tip his shafts. My love, Vásavadattá!

Vásava.—My lord! Victory attend him: let him honor our rites by his presence!—That is his regal seat.

Kánch.—Now, let her majesty commence the ceremony, and to the god, whose station is the red asoka tree, present the accustomed gifts of sandal, saffron and flowers.

Vásava.—Give them to me.

Kánch.—(Presents them severally to the queen, who offers them to the image.)

Vats.—Whilst thus employed, my love, you resemble a graceful creeper twining round a coral tree; your robes of the orange dye, your person fresh from the bath. As rests your

hand upon the stem of the asoka, it seems to put forth a new and lovelier shoot. The unembodied god to-day will regret his disencumbered essence, and sigh to be material, that he might enjoy the touch of that soft hand.

Kánch.—The worship of the divinity concluded, be pleased, madam, to pay adoration to your lord.

Vásava.—Where are flowers and unguent?

Kánch.—Here, madam.

(Vásavadattá worships the king.)

Ságar.—(Returns.) I have idled my time whilst gathering these flowers, so that I fear the ceremony is over; behind this tree I can observe them undiscovered. What do I see! can this be true? Does then the deity, whose effigy only we adore in the dwelling of my father, here condescend to accept in person the homage of his votaries! I, too, though thus remote, present my humble offering. (Throws down the flowers.) Glory to the flower-armed god: may thy auspicious sight both now and hereafter prove not to have been vouchsafed to me in vain! (Bows down, then rising looks again.) The sight, though oft repeated, never wearies. I must tear myself from this, lest some one should discover me. (Withdraws a little.)

Kánch.—Approach, Vasantaka, and receive your portion.

Vásava.—Accept, most worthy Sir, these propitiatory presents. (Gives Vasantaka sandal, flowers and jewels.)

Vas.—May prosperous fortune ever be your fate!

(The Bard behind.)

The sun from his diurnal road declines,
And in the west with flaming radiance glows—
Like some illustrious prince, whose glory shines
Intensest as his days approach their close.
The moon comes forth amidst the evening sky,
With aspect as our youthful monarch's bright,
To soothe the night flower's love-empassioned sigh,
And at thy feet to shed his sacred light.

Ságar.—How! (returning). Is this Udayana, to whom my

father destined me a bride! The sight of him has purified my person from the contaminating gaze of others.

Vats.—The twilight has drawn in, and we have been insensible of the course of time, our minds engrossed by holy and delightful duties. Look, madam, where the pale eastern sky, like a love-lorn damsel, seems to sicken with impatience for the coming of her lord. Let us rise and return to the palace. (They rise.)

Ságar.—They come! I must fly hence. Ah me, unhappy! no longer to behold him whom I could gaze upon forever.

Vats.—Come, love, thou puttest the night to shame. The beauty of the moon is eclipsed by the loveliness of thy countenance, and the lotus sinks humbled into shade—the sweet songs of thy attendant damsels discredit the murmur of the bees, and, mortified, they hasten to hide their disgrace within the flowery blossom. (Exeunt.)

ACT II.

The Garden of the Palace.

Enter Susangatá with a Sáríká, or talking bird, in a cage.

Susangatá.—What can have become of Ságariká? She left this bird in my charge, and went I know not whither. Here comes Nipuniká!

Enter Nipuniká.

Nipuniká.—These tidings his majesty has charged me with, I must use dispatch in conveying to the queen. (Going.)

Sus.—How now! Nipuniká, what engrosses your thoughts, that you pass as if you saw me not—whither, in such haste?

Nip.—I will tell you. We have a great sage come to court, the venerable Srikhanda Dás, from Sri Parvat. He has taught the king the craft of making flowers blossom at any season, and his majesty being about to exercise his new art upon his favorite jasmine, sends me to request the queen's presence. But where are you going?

Sus.—To look for Ságariká.

Nip.—I passed her just now; she had a brush and pallet as

if about to paint a picture, and went into the plantain bower: you will find her there, I dare say. Adieu! I must to our mistress. (Exeunt severally.)

A Plantain Bower or Hall.

Enter Ságariká, with a picture.

Ságariká.—Be still, my foolish heart, nor idly throb for one so high above thy hopes. Why thus anxious again to behold that form, one only view of which has inspired such painful agitation? Ungrateful, too, as weak, to fly the breast that has been familiar to thee through life, and seek another, and as yet, but once beheld, asylum. Alas! why do I blame thee: the terror of Ananga's shaft has rendered thee a fugitive;—let me implore his pity. Lord of the flowery bow, victor of demons and of gods! dost thou not blush to waste thy might upon a weak defenseless maiden, or art thou truly without form or sense? Ah me! I fear my death impends, and this the fatal cause (looking at the picture). No one approaches; I will try and finish the likeness I am here attempting to portray (looking at the picture). My heart beats high, my hand trembles, yet I must try, and, whilst occasion favors me, attempt to complete these lineaments, as the only means to retain them in my sight. (Draws.)

Enter Susangatá.

Sus.—This is the plantain bower. Ha! she is here, and apparently so intent upon some painting that she does not notice my approach. I will keep out of her sight and look at what she is doing. (Approaches gently and looks over Ságariká.) How!—the king's picture! well done, Ságariká! but so it is: the royal swan leaves not the lotus-crowded lake to sport elsewhere.

Ság.—It is finished, but in vain; my tears veil the picture from my sight. (Raises her head, and, beholding Susangatá, hides the picture.) How, Susangatá! sit down.

Sus.—(Sits down and puts her hand upon the picture.) Who is this you have delineated?

Ság.—The deity of this festival, Ananga.

Sus.—It is cleverly done, but there wants a figure to complete it. Let me have it and I will give the god his bride. (Takes the paper and draws.)

Ság.—(Angrily.) Hey, Susangatá! what mean you; you have sketched my likeness?

Sus.—Do not be offended without cause. I have given your Kámadeva my Retí, that is all. But come, away with disguise and confess the truth.

Ság.—(Apart.) My friend has discovered my secret. (Aloud.) My dear friend, I am overcome with shame—promise me that nobody else shall be made acquainted with my weakness?

Sus.—Why should you be ashamed?—attachment to exalted worth becomes your native excellence. But be assured I will not betray you; it is more likely this prattling bird will repeat our conversation.

Ság.—Alas! my friend, my agitation overpowers me.

Sus.—(Placing her hands on Ságariká's heart.) Be composed, be composed! I will bring some leaves and fibres of the water-lily from this lake. (Brings some leaves and fibres of the lotus, and binds the former with the latter upon Ságariká's bosom.)

Ság.—Enough, enough, my friend; take away these leaves and fibres—it is vain to offer me relief. I have fixed my heart where I dare not raise my hopes. I am overcome with shame—I am enslaved by passion—my love is without return—death my only refuge. (Faints.)

(A noise behind.)

The monkey has escaped from the stable and rattling the ends of his broken chain of gold, he clatters along as if a number of female feet, bound with tinkling anklets, were in sportive motion. Chased by the grooms and frightening the women, he has bounded through the inner gate. The unmanly eunuchs, lost to shame, fly from his path, and the dwarf takes shelter in the jacket of the chamberlain. The Kirátas who guard the surrounding walls are true to their designation, and bowing themselves lowly through fear, are ashamed to look each other in the face.

Sus.—Up, up, my dear friend! the wild brute is coming hither.

Ság.—What shall we do?

Sus.—Hide in the shade of this tamála grove: haste, he comes! (Exeunt.)

SCENE—ANOTHER PART OF THE GARDEN.

Enter Ságariká and Susangatá.

Ság.—What has become of the drawing: did you leave it behind? some one will discover it.

Sus.—Never heed the picture now. The ape has broken the cage to get at the curds and rice, and let the sáriká fly: let us endeavor to recover her, or she will repeat what has passed between us.

Behind.—Astonishing, astonishing!

Ság.—Hey, Susangatá, is that the ape coming?

Sus.—No, coward; it is the worthy Vasantaka, our royal master's friend. Let us hence, the sáriká is far away.

Ság.—I attend you. (Exeunt.)

Enter Vasantaka.

Vasantaka.—Very strange, indeed! most marvelous! the power of Srikhanda Dás is most surprising, by whose simple will the jasmine has been covered with countless buds, as if smiling disdainfully upon the queen's favorite mádhaví. I will go and tell my friend what has happened. Ah! yonder he comes, looking quite confident of his hopes, and as pleased as if he looked upon the jasmine blossoming in his presence. His eye sparkles with pleasure: I will join him. (Exit.)

SCENE—ANOTHER PART OF THE GARDEN.

Enter Vatsa.

Vatsa.—I shall make the queen turn pale with anger. She will look upon the creeper like a rival beauty, as the delicate shrub displays the brilliance of its nascent buds, and swells, as gently inflated with the zephyr's sighs.

Vas.—(Approaches.) Victory to your majesty!—fortune is propitious.

Vats.—I doubt it not, my friend; for inconceivable is the virtue of drugs, and charms, and gems. Lead the way, and let these eyes this day obtain by the sight the fruit of their formation.

Vas.—This way.

Vats.—Precede.

Vas.—(Advances and stops to listen: he turns back in alarm.) Fly, fly, Sir!

Vats.—Why?

Vas.—There is a goblin in yonder bakula tree!

Vats.—Away, simpleton, go on, and fear not! how should any such being have power at this season to harm?

Vas.—He speaks quite distinctly—if you disbelieve me advance and listen.

Vats.—(Advances.) I hear a distinct voice, and a sweet one, too, like that of a woman: from its small and sharp tone it must be a starling. (Looking up.) Ah! there she sits.

Vas.—A starling?

Vats.—(Laughing.) A starling; look there!

Vas.—And so, my good friend, your fears made you fancy a starling to be a goblin.

Vats.—Out on you, blockhead! would you accuse me of what you have done yourself?

Vas.—Well, now do not interfere. (Holds up his staff.) You impertinent bird, have you no more respect for a Brahman: stop a moment, and with this crooked staff I will bring you down from the tree like a ripe wood-apple.

Vats.—Forbear, forbear! how prettily she talks.

Vas.—Yes, now I listen again, she says, give this Brahman something to eat.

Vats.—Something to eat is ever the burden of the glutton's song. Come, say truly, what does she utter?

Vas.—(Listening and repeating.) "Who is this you have delineated? Do not be offended without cause; I have given your Kámadeva, my Reti." Hey, Sir! what should this mean?

Vats.—Oh, I suppose some female has been drawing her lover's portrait and passing it off on her companion as the picture of the god of love: her friend has found her out, and ingeniously exposed her evasion by delineating her in the character of Kâma's bride.

Vas.—Very likely.

Vats.—Be still, she speaks again. (They listen.)

Vas.—(Repeating.) "Why should you be ashamed; attachment to exalted worth becomes your native excellence."

Vats.—Likely, likely!

Vas.—Nay, do not you presume upon your scholarship; I will expound all she says, when she has finished. The lady that is pictured is very handsome.

Vats.—We shall have leisure to satisfy our curiosity; let us now listen.

Vas.—Very well; do you hear what she says: "Take away these lotus leaves and fibres—it is in vain you strive to offer me relief."

Vats.—I hear and understand.

Vas.—How the jade chatters to-day! but I will explain all I hear.

Vats.—Very likely, but now listen.

Vas.—Hey!—I declare she speaks in measure, like a Brahman skilled in the four Vedas.

Vats.—What said she, I did not hear?

Vas.—"I have fixed my heart where I dare not raise my hopes;—I am overcome with shame and despair, and death is my only refuge."

Vats.—With the exception of yourself, my worthy friend, what learned Brahman would call this speaking in measure?

Vas.—Why, what is it?

Vats.—Prose.

Vas.—Prose! Oh, very well, and what does it mean?

Vats.—Some young female may be supposed to have spoken the sentence, indifferent to life, because uncertain of her affection being returned.

Vas.—(Laughing loudly.) You may as well drop these evasive interpretations: why not say at once, "The damsel doubts my returning her passion." Who but yourself could have been delineated as the god of the flowery bow? (Claps his hands and laughs.)

Vats.—Peace, simpleton! your obstreperous mirth has frightened the bird away; see! there she flies.

Vas.—She has perched on the plantain bower: let us follow her.

Vats.—Oppressed by the shafts of Káma, the delicate maid entrusts her companions with the sorrows of her breast: the tattling parrot or imitative starling repeats her words, and they find a hospitable welcome in the ears of the fortunate. (Exeunt.)

THE PLANTAIN BOWER.

Enter Vatsa and Vasantaka.

Vas.—Here is the bower; let us enter: but what has become of the starling? No matter; let us rest on this bench, where the breeze breathes cool and soft amidst the waving leaves of these bananas.

Vats.—As you please. (They sit.)

Vas.—What is yonder? It looks like the cage of the starling—broken to pieces most probably by the monkey.

Vats.—See what it is.

Vas.—I will. (Looking about.) What's here, a picture—takes it up). Ha, ha! my friend, you are in luck.

Vats.—What is that?

Vas.—Just what I said: here is your likeness. Who but yourself could have been delineated as the god of the flowery bow?

Vats.—Give it me.

Vas.—Stop a little. What! is such a jewel of a girl as is here pictured to be seen for nothing?

Vats.—Take this. (Gives him a golden bracelet, and Vasantaka delivers the picture.) Ha! behold, my friend; what lovely swan is this that wings her flight to Mánasa, in whose

sports the lotus trembles, who declares such auspicious fortune shall befall us, and whose face might be taken for the full moon by Brahmá, when he first emerged from his lotus throne — (looking at the picture).

Enter Susangatá and Ságariká.

Sus.—It is hopeless to follow the bird; let us get the drawing again, therefore, and go in.

Ság.—By all means.

Vas.—(To the king.) Well, my friend, who is this damsel, think you, that seems to bend her head so humbly?

Sus.—Hark! I hear Vasanta talking—I suspect to the king; let us conceal ourselves amongst the plants and hear what they are talking of. (They hide behind the plantain trees.)

Vats.—Brahmá, when he first emerged from his lotus throne, had taken such a face for the unrivalled orb of the moon.

Sus.—(To Ságariká.) You are in luck, girl; your lover is dwelling upon your praises.

Ság.—How can you make so light of me as to treat me as matter for your mirth?

Vas.—Why should she hang down her head in this manner?

Vats.—Has not the starling told us all?

Sus.—There! I told you so; that bird has repeated our conversation.

Ság.—(To herself.) What will he reply? I hang between life and death!

Vas.—Well, and does she please your eyes?

Vats.—Please my eyes, say you? My sight insatiate rests upon her graceful limbs and slender waist: reluctantly it rises to her budding bosom, and thence ascending, fixes on those soft, expressive orbs, where tremulously hangs the crystal tear.

Sus.—Did you hear?

Ság.—Did you hear? he praises the artist's skill!

Vas.—Well, Sir, and what dullness must there be in you,

not to perceive that in this, the object of the damsel's affection, your resemblance is exhibited?

Vats.—I cannot deny that she has flatteringly delineated my likeness, nor doubt her sentiments,—for observe the traces of the tear that has fallen upon her work, like the moist dew that starts from every pore of my frame.

Ság.—(To herself.) Heart, be of good cheer! your passion is directed to a corresponding object.

Sus.—My friend, you are fortunate; we must treat you now with the deference due to her whom our master loves.

Vas.—(Looking round.) Here are other traces of her passion: the lotus leaves she has applied to her heart whilst revealing her affection to her friend.

Vats.—You have guessed well. Where it has been in contact with her form the leaf has faded, but is still green where the contour of her well-proportioned shape has interposed an interval between the verdure and her person. The central freshness of the lotus leaf that has reposed upon her bosom reveals not the fervor of her love, but these two pallid circles on either side betray the violence of her affection.

Vas.—(Picking up the fibre.) Here is another vestige—it has bound the lotus leaf upon her bosom.

Vats.—(Applying it to his heart.) It still dispenses its cooling freshness. Say, fibre, art thou withered, because thou art no longer cherished between those palpitating orbs, whose friendly contiguity scarce leaves room for the lodgment of a silken thread, much less for thee.

Sus.—(Apart.) His grace must be violently affected to talk thus incoherently. It will not become me to leave him to these fancies. (To Ságariká.) Well, my friend, what you came for is before you.

Ság.—Why, what did I come for, pray?

Sus.—The picture, what else? there it is—take it.

Ság.—(Angrily.) As I don't understand what you say, I shall leave you. (Going.)

Sus.—How now, impatient! stop a moment, and I will recover the drawing before we leave this place.

Ság.—Do so.

(Susangatá comes forward, so as to be seen by Vasantaka.)

Vas.—Hide the picture, here, in this plantain leaf—here comes one of the queen's damsels. (Vatsa covers it with his mantle.)

Sus.—(Advancing.) Glory to the king!

Vats.—Welcome, Susangatá; sit down. How knew you that I was here?

Sus.—That is not all my knowledge; I am acquainted with the secret of the picture, and some other matters, of which I shall apprize her majesty. (Going.)

Vas.—(Apart to Vatsa.) It is all blown—she is a great tattler—better bribe her to be silent.

Vats.—Stay, Susangatá; accept these ornaments. (Takes off his bracelet, etc.) This is but a matter of sport, not to be mentioned to the queen.

Sus.—Your grace is bountiful, you need not fear me. I was but in jest, and do not want these jewels. The truth is, my dear friend, Ságariká, is very angry with me for drawing her picture, and I shall be much obliged to your majesty to intercede for me and appease her resentment.

Vats.—(Springing up.) Where is she? lead me to her!

Vas.—Give me the picture—I will take care of it; it may again be wanted.

Sus.—This way. (They advance.)

Ság.—He is here—I tremble at his sight.———I can neither stand nor move—what shall I do?

Vas.—(Seeing her.) A most surprising damsel, truly; such another is not to be found in this world. I am confident that when she was created Brahmá was astonished at his own performance.

Vats.—Such are my impressions The four mouths of Brahmá must at once have exclaimed in concert, bravo, bravo! when the deity beheld these eyes more beauteous than the leaves of his own lotus, and his heads must have shaken with wonder, as he contemplated loveliness, the ornament of all the world.

Ság.—(To Susangata.) This is the picture you have brought. (Going.)

Vats.—You turn your eyes upon your friend in anger, lovely maid; yet such is their native tenderness they cannot assume a harsh expression. Look thus, but do not leave us, for your departure hence will alone give me pain.

Sus.—She is very angry, Sir, I assure you; take her hand and pacify her.

Vats.—You advise me well (Takes Ságariká by the hand.)

Vas.—I congratulate you, Sir; you enjoy unprecedented fortune.

Vats.—You say rightly—she is the very deity Lakshmí herself: her hand is the new shoot of the párijáta tree, else whence distil these dew-drops of ambrosia?

Sus.—It is not possible, my dear friend, you can remain inexorable whilst honored thus with his grace's hand.

Ság.—(Frowning.) Will you not forbear, Susangatá?

Vats.—Nay, you must not be angry with your friend.

Vas.—Why, like a hungry Brahman, should you thus be out of humor, lady?

Sus.—Very well, my friend, I will say no more.

Vats.—This is not right, resentful girl, to be so unforgiving to your intimate companions.

Vas.—Hey! here again is Madam Vásavadattá.

(The Raja lets go Ságariká's hand in alarm.)

Ság.—(To Susangatá.) What shall I do?

Sus.—We can escape unperceived behind this tamála tree. (They go off hastily.)

Vats.—(Looking round.) Why, my friend, where is the queen, where is Vásavadattá?

Vas.—I do not know. I said, here again is Madam Vásavadattá; I meant in testiness of temper.

Vats.—Out on thee! thou hast rudely snapped the string of splendid gems, that fate and acknowledged love had hung around my neck. (They retire.)

Enter Vásavadattá the Queen, and Kánchanamálá, an attendant.

Vásavadattá.—Well, girl, how far from hence is my lord's favorite jasmine tree?

Kánchanamálá.—It is but a little way farther: we shall see it after passing this plantain bower.

Vásava.—Let us hasten.

Kánch.—I think I see his majesty. Yes, there he is; will it please you join him?

Vásava.—(Approaching Vatsa.) Glory to my lord!

Vats.—(To Vasantaka.) Hide the picture—quick.

(Vasantaka takes it and holds it under his arm.)

Vásava.—Has the jasmine budded yet, my lord?

Vats.—I have been waiting your arrival, and have not yet seen it; we will now visit it together.

Vásava.—Oh no—I see by your countenance that it has flowered: that is sufficient, I will go no further.

Vas.—Then your grace acknowledges we have conquered! huzza! (Waves his hand and dances; the picture falls; the Raja observes it, looks at him angrily and points to the picture.)

Vas.—(Apart to Vatsa.) Be calm; I will manage it.

Kánch.—(Picking up the picture and showing it to the queen.) See, madam, whose portrait is this?

Vásava.—(Looking at it and apart.) This is my lord, and is not this Ságariká? (Aloud to Vatsa.) Pray what is this, my lord?

Vats.—(To Vasantaka.) What shall I say?

Vas.—(To Vatsa.) Fear not, leave it to me. (Aloud to Vásavadattá.) I was observing, madam, that it would be very difficult to hit my friend's likeness, on which his majesty was pleased to give me this specimen of his skill.

Vats.—It is as Vasantaka tells you.

Vásava.—And this female standing near you—I suppose this is a specimen of Vasantaka's skill?

Vats.—What should you suspect? That is a mere fancy portrait; the original was never seen before.

Vas.—I'll swear to this, by my Brahmanical cord, that the original was never before seen by either of us.

Kánch.—(To the queen, apart.) Why should he speak evasively, madam? there is no need to be angry.

Vásava.—(To her.) My honest girl, you do not understand his prevarications. I know Vasantaka. (Aloud.) My lord, excuse me. Looking at this picture has given me a slight headache. I leave you to your amusements. (Going.)

Vats.—What can I say to you, dearest? I really am at a loss! If I ask you to forgive me, that is unnecessary, if you are not offended; and how can I promise to do so no more, when I have committed no fault—although you will not believe my assertions.

Vásava.—(Detaching herself gently and with politeness.) You mistake, my lord; I assure you my head aches; on that account I take my leave. (Exit with Kánchanamálá.)

Vas.—Your majesty has had a lucky escape. The queen's anger has dispersed like summer clouds.

Vats.—Away, blockhead, we have no occasion to rejoice: could you not discover the queen's anger through her unsuccessful attempts to disguise it? Her face was clouded with a passing frown. As she hung down her head she looked on me with an affected smile. She gave utterance to no angry words 'tis true, and the swelling eye glowed not with rage—but a starting tear was with difficulty suppressed; and although she treated me with politeness, struggling indignation lurked in every gesture. We must follow and endeavor to pacify her. (Exeunt.)

ACT III.

Scene I—A Chamber in the Palace.

Enter Madaniká, one of the queen's attendants.

Madaniká.—Ho, Kausámbiká! tell me if Kánchanamálá is with the queen? (Listening.) What say you; she came in

some time since and went out again; where can she be? Oh, she comes.

Enter Kánchanamálá.

Kánchanamálá.—Bravo, Vasantaka, bravo! you are a deeper politician than the prime minister himself.

Mad.—How now, fellow Kánchanamálá, what has Vasantaka done to merit your praises?

Kánch.—What occasion is there for your asking? you are not able to keep the secret!

Mad.—I swear by the feet of the queen, I will not mention it to anybody.

Kánch.—On that condition you shall hear. As I was passing from the palace to-day I overheard Vasantaka and Susangatá in conversation behind the door of the picture gallery.

Mad.—What was the subject?

Kánch.—Vasantaka said Ságariká alone is the cause of my friend's indisposition; do you, Susangatá, devise a remedy.

Mad.—And what replied she?

Kánch.—She said, the queen having discovered what was going forward by finding the picture, but not suspecting me, has placed Ságariká under my charge—giving me, to insure my vigilance, some of her own clothes and ornaments. With these I will equip Ságariká as the queen, and myself as Kánchanamálá, and thus disguised will meet his majesty at the mádhava bower about sunset: do you come to this place and conduct us thither.

Mad.—Very well plotted, Susangatá; but you are mistaken, if you think to deceive a mistress so kind to her attendants.

Kánch.—And where are you going?

Mad.—I was coming to look for you. You were so long in bringing us an answer about his majesty's illness that the queen was very anxious and sent me to see what had become of you.

Kánch.—Her majesty is too simple, to be so easily deceived. But the king, whose only illness is love, is sitting in the pavilion over the ivory gate. Come along, let us carry this news to the queen.

THE PAVILION.

(Vatsa discovered.)

Vatsa.—Endure, my heart, the fever love has kindled, and which the maid I sigh for can alone allay. Why reproach me with my folly for seeking to subdue thy fervors with the cooling sandal, instead of that lovely hand which was awhile in my grasp! The mind from its natural unsteadiness should be a difficult mark to hit; how happens it that the archer-god has lodged all his shafts in mine! Deity of the flowery bow, innumerable are those who may be struck with thy five arrows, and such as I am are notoriously thy aim. But in this is the usual state of things reversed, that I, singly, am pierced with thy countless darts, and am about to perish. Yet I suffer less on my own account than for poor Ságariká. She shrinks from every gaze, suspecting that her secret is discovered. If she observe two of her companions in conversation, she fancies herself the subject; and if they laugh, she thinks she is the object of their mirth. Alas, my love! thy uneasiness excites my compassion, and I share the dread thou sufferest from the glances of the queen, as they bend on thee with ill dissembled indignation.—How long Vasantaka delays! I have sent him to obtain some tidings of the maiden.

Enter Vasantaka.

Vasantaka.—(To himself.) Ha, ha! my friend, you will be better pleased to-day than when you ascended the throne of Kausámbí, when you hear the agreeable news I bring you. Oh, there he is: he seems expecting me. Joy, joy, my friend; fortune is propitious and promises to accomplish your desire.

Vats.—How is Ságariká?

Vas.—In a little time you may judge for yourself.

Vats.—What, may I hope to see her soon?

Vas.—Why not, am I not your counsellor; I who laugh at the wisdom of Vrihaspatí?

Vats.—Admitted—there is nothing you cannot manage; but come, tell me, I long to hear the particulars.

Vas.—(Whispers in his ear.) There, you have the whole.

Vats.—This merits reward. (Gives him a bracelet.)

Vas.—(Takes it and puts it on.) Very becoming; a golden bracelet suits my arm. I will go and show it to my wife. (Going.)

Vats.—Stop, my friend, stop, another time will serve your purpose. How much of the day remains?

Vas.—(Looking.) See, my friend, the lord of a thousand rays approaches the bowers of the western mountain.

Vats.—True, the lord of the one-wheeled car having performed the circuit of the world, now purposes to suspend his labors till the morrow's dawn, and halting on the mountain's brow, he calls in his scattered rays, whose golden lines converging round his chariot look like the radiant spokes that shoot to their centre from the wide circumference of the spheres. As with assembled beams he rests upon the summit of the western hill, the lord of day thus breathes his farewell to the lotus: "Adieu, my beloved, my hour is come and I must depart: sleep dwell upon thy lids, till I again disturb thy slumbers." Let us therefore away to the mádhavi bower, and be punctual to the time appointed by my fair.

Vas.—I attend you. The interval that separates the trees of the grove is lost, and they seem to form one close compacted mass. A dusky hue, like that of the hide of the buffalo or wild boar besmeared with mire, extends over the garden, and thick glooms spreading above the east, obscure the horizon.

Vats.—True: first gathering in the east, the deepening gloom successively obscures the other regions of the sky: becoming intenser as it proceeds, it steals the hue of Siva's neck, and mountains, trees and towns, the heavens and the earth, are hidden from our sight. Let us to the garden. (Exeunt.)

THE GARDEN.

Enter Vatsa and Vasantaka.

Vas.—This clump of trees should be the makaranda grove, but I am not quite certain: how shall we find the way?

Vats.—Go on, we are right, I know the path. The champaka trees are here, I smell their fragrance; and now the sindhuváras; we now pass the cluster of bakulas, and here are

the pátali trees: their various odor indicates their situation, and would enable us to track the walk were they concealed by twice the present gloom.

Vas.—Ha! here we are, this is the mádhavi bower. I know it by the perfume of the buds so tempting to the bees and the smoothness of the emerald pavement. Do you remain here whilst I go for Ságariká; I shall soon be back.

Vats.—Do not be long.

Vas.—Do not be impatient, my friend. I am back already. (Exit.)

Vats.—I wait you on this emerald seat. Who will take part with the inconstant swain, that abandons his old love for a new? The timid damsel that comes to her first assignation casts but a sidelong glance upon her beloved, and though she shrink not from his embrace, averts her countenance from his gaze. "Let me go," she murmurs repeatedly; "I will leave you!" but still submits to the gentle violence that prevents her departure. What heightened charms does a stolen interview bestow upon the amorous maid! How long Vasantaka delays! surely Vásanvadattá has not heard of our design. (Retires.)

A Chamber.

Enter Vásavadattá and Kánchanamálá.

Vásavadattá.—Can it be possible, wench, that Ságariká has promised to meet my lord disguised in my attire!

Kánchanamálá.—I have told your majesty; but if we find Vasantaka at the door of the picture gallery, your doubts, I hope, will be removed.

Vásava.—Let us thither. (Exeunt.)

Chamber Leading to the Picture Gallery.

Enter Vasantaka, disguised.

Vas.—I thought I heard the tread of feet; Ságariká approaches. (Retires.)

Enter Vásavadattá and Kánchanamálá.

Kánch.—This is the place, madam. Now to see if Vasantaka is here. (Snaps her fingers.)

Vas.—(Approaching.) Ha, Susangatá! well done: I declare I should have taken you for Kánchanamálá. Where is Ságariká?

Kánch.—(Pointing to Vásavadattá.) There.

Vas.—Why, this is the very queen herself.

Vásava.—(Alarmed and apart.) How! am I recognized!

Vas.—Come, Ságariká, this way.

Kánch.—(To the queen.) All's safe, madam. (Pointing to Vasantaka.) Ah! rogue, you will have cause to remember your words.

Vas.—Haste, haste, Ságariká! the deer-marked deity rises in the east. (Exeunt.)

A Grove.

(Vatsa discovered.)

Vats.—Why is my heart so agitated when I expect an interview with my fair; or is it that the flame of love burns fiercest as it approaches its gratification, as the days are hottest when the rains are about to descend.

Enter Vasantaka, Vásavadattá and Kánchanamálá.

Vas.—(To Vásavadattá.) Lady Ságariká, I hear my friend muttering to himself his anxiety for your appearance; I will announce your arrival. (Vásavadattá nods assent.) Fortune is propitious to your majesty; Ságariká is here!

Vats.—(Approaching her.) My beloved Ságariká, thy countenance is radiant as the moon, thy eyes are two lotus buds, thy hand is the full-blown flower, and thy arms its graceful filaments. Come thou, whose whole form is the shrine of ecstasy, come to my arms and allay the feverish pangs inflicted by the shapeless god.

Vásava.—(Weeping, apart to Kánchanamálá.) Ah, girl! my lord now speaks his honest self—how soon will his tone be changed. Is not this incomprehensible?

Kánch.—It is so, indeed, madam; there is nothing so bad that it may not be expected from these abominable men.

Vas.—Come, Ságariká, take courage; speak to his majesty.

We have had the harsh tones of the angry Queen Vásavadattá grating in our ears to-day; let them be now regaled with the melody of your sweet voice.

Vásava.—(To Kánchanamálá, apart.) Hey, girl! I am accustomed to speak harshly? The worthy Vasantaka is very complimentary.

Kánch.—He will have cause to recollect this.

Vas.—See, my friend, the moon is up, and casts on every thing his rays as pallid as the maiden's cheek that whitens with resentment.

Vats.—See, love, the lord of night now stands upon the mountain's crest and throws his scattered rays around to emulate the radiance of thy cheek. But idle is his coming—does not thy countenance shame the beauty of the lotus! do not thine eyes diffuse dearer delight! What aid can he bring to the influence of the fish-bannered god, which is not wrought by a single glance of thine? Why should the moon show himself whilst thy resplendent charms are visible? And if he rises, proud of his store of nectar, does he not know thy lips may boast, too, of ambrosia!

Vásava.—(Throwing off her veil.) Believe me still Ságariká, my good lord; your heart is so fascinated by her, you fancy you behold Ságariká in everything.

Vats.—(Apart.) How! the Queen Vásavadattá! What is this?

Vas.—My life is in jeopardy—that is—what it is.

Vats.—(To the queen.) Forgive me, dearest.

Vásava.—Address not this to me, my lord—the epithet is another's property.

Vas.—(Apart.) What is to be done! (Aloud.) Nay, madam! you are of too generous a spirit not to forgive this first offense of my dear friend.

Vásava.—Worthy Vasantaka, the offense is mine, who have presumed to interrupt this intended interview.

Vats.—It is of no use to deny it. But hear me: I bow me to thy feet, and mark my forehead with their vermil dye, in hope to transfer thither the hue with which anger discolors thy moon-like countenance. (Falls at her feet.)

Vásava.—Rise, my lord, rise! that wife must be unreasonable, indeed, who with such evidence of her lord's affection can presume to be offended. Be happy, I take my leave. (Going.)

Vas.—Nay, madam, be merciful; I am sure, if you quit his majesty in this posture, you will hereafter repent it.

Vásava.—Away, fool! I know no reason for mercy nor repentance. (Exit with Kánchanamálá.)

Vas.—Your majesty may get up, the queen is gone. What is the use of weeping in a wood?

Vats.—What, gone, without relenting!

Vas.—Not so, either, for our limbs are whole.

Vats.—Out, simpleton! do you make a jest of this; you, by whose blundering this untoward accident has happened! The genuine regard our long and tender union his inspired will now appear pretended, and the impression of my inconstancy may render her unable to endure existence. No pang is so intolerable as that of unrequited affection.

Vas.—The queen is angry, that is a clear case; as to what she will do, that is by no means certain. In the meantime, is Ságariká alive or not?

Vats.—I was thinking of her. (They retire.)

Enter Ságariká (behind), dressed as the queen.

Ságariká.—I have luckily got clear of the music hall, and have come so far in this disguise without being observed. But, alas! what shall I do now?

Vas.—Why thus lost in thought, something must be devised.

Vats.—But what?

Ság.—(Behind.) 'Twere better far that I should put an end at once to my sufferings and my life: the queen will then know nothing of my purpose, and Susangatá and I shall both escape disgrace. This tree will do.

Vats.—I see nothing left for it but to appease the queen. Come, let us go in.

Vas.—Stop, I heard steps! perhaps she has thought better and returns.

Vats.—She is a woman of a generous spirit—it may be so. Quick, ascertain!

Ság.—With the fibres of the mádhaví I will suspend myself to this bough. Alas! my dear friends, far, far away, alone and unfriended, I thus terminate my miserable existence. (Fastening the noose around her neck.)

Vas.—Who is there?—Ha, the queen! Hey why, what! haste, haste, my friend, or Vásavadattá will destroy herself.

Vats.—(Advancing hastily.) Where, where is she?

Vas.—Behold!

Vats.—(Rushing to her and tearing off the tendril.) Intemperate woman! what horrid act is this! my own life trembles in my throat: existence is not yours to abandon: forego such desperate thought.

Ság.—(Apart.) My lord! His presence inspires the love of life; at least my last wish is accomplished, and having seen him, I shall die content. (Aloud.) Let me go, Sir, you forget my dependent station; I may not find again an opportunity to end this hated being. Beware how you displease the queen.

Vats.—Can it be, my own Ságariká! No more of this despair; away with these fatal bands, and to arrest my fleeting life, twine round my neck the noose of these dear arms. (Embraces her.) My friend, it rains without a cloud.

Vas.—Very true, if the queen does not return like a sudden squall and spoil our fine weather.

Enter Vásavadattá and Kánchanamálá.

Vásava.—I treated my lord too disrespectfully, girl, as he condescended to cast himself at my feet; I must therefore see him again, and behave to him with more temper.

Kánch.—Who would think in this way but your grace? However, better the king fail in decorum than your majesty, so let us seek him.

Vats.—Say, fair maid, may not our affection hope to be returned?

Kánch.—I hear his majesty's voice, he is probably seeking for you in hopes to pacify your anger.

Vásava.—Let us approach gently from behind; I will cast my arms round his neck and tell him I forgive him.

Vas.—Take courage, Ságariká, make my friend a reply.

Vásava.—(Apart.) Ságariká here!—keep back, let us listen; I will presently be of the party.

Ság.—Why, Sir, will you thus pretend regard you do not feel, and wantonly risk the displeasure of the queen, who, I know, is dearer to you than your life?

Vats.—You utter what is not quite true, my love. When her bosom swells with sighs I express concern; when she is sullen I soothe her; when her brows are bent, and her face is distorted with anger, I fall prostrate at her feet. These marks of respect are due to the queen's exalted station; but the regard that springs from vehement affection, that is yours alone.

Vásava.—(Coming forward.) I believe you, my lord, I believe you.

Vats.—How now, madam, is it you? Why then, you need not be offended. Cannot you perceive that I have been attracted hither, and misled by this resemblance of your dress and person? Be composed, I beg you. (Falls at her feet.)

Vásava.—Rise, rise! let not my exalted station put you to such unnecessary inconvenience.

Vats.—(Aside.) She has overheard me—there is no chance, then, of appeasing her.

Vas.—It is very true, madam. I assure you, that deceived by the belief that you were attempting to destroy yourself, I brought my friend to this spot, to preserve, as I thought, your life. If you doubt me, see this noose. (Takes up the noose.)

Vásava.—Kánchanamálá, girl, take the twisted tendril and secure that Brahman, and make this hussy go on before us.

Kánch.—As you command. (Puts the noose over Vasantaka's neck and beats him with the other end of it.) Now, Sir, see what is the consequence of your ingenuity. You have had the queen's harsh voice grating in your ears, have you? do you recollect this. Come, Ságariká, do you go on before.

Ság.—Why did I not perish when I sought to die!

Vas.—Think of me, my dear friend, who am thus carried off an unfortunate captive by the queen.

(Exeunt all but Vatsa.)

Vats.—What an unlucky business this is! What is to be done? how shall I dissipate the rage that clouds the smiling countenance of the queen! how rescue Ságariká from the dread of her resentment, or liberate my friend Vasantaka? I am quite bewildered with these events, and can no longer command my ideas.—At any rate, it is useless to stay here: I will in and endeavor to pacify Vásavadattá. (Exit.)

ACT IV.

A Chamber.

Enter Susangatá, with a diamond necklace in her hand.

Susangatá.—Alas, alas! my dear friend Ságariká, my timid, my tender, my generous friend: whither, lovely maiden, are you gone? shall I not again behold you? Pitiless destiny, why shouldst thou have endowed her with such unrivalled charms, to consign her to so hapless a fate! Despairing of her life, she has begged me to give this necklace to some Brahman. Whom shall I present it to? Eh, here comes Vasantaka, I will give it to him.

Enter Vasantaka.

Vasantaka.—So, I am well out of the scrape. Appeased by my excellent friend's intercession, her majesty has not only restored me to freedom, but has regaled me with cates from her own fair hands, and presented me with a dress and these earrings. Now then to seek the king.

Sus.—(Advances.) Worthy Vasantaka, one moment.

Vas.—Hey, Susangatá, what's the matter; why do you weep? no bad news, I hope, of Ságariká?

Sus.—It is of her I wished to speak. It is said that the queen ordered her off to Ujayin, and she was taken away at midnight; but whither she is gone I know not.

Vas.—Alas, poor Ságariká, a damsel of such unequalled

charms, and of such a gentle disposition! I much fear the violence of the queen.

Sus.—She herself despaired of life, poor girl, and left with me this diamond necklace, to be presented to the worthy Vasantaka. Pray you, accept it.

Vas.—(Covering his ears.) Excuse me, I could not stretch out my hand to take so sad a memorial. (Weeps.)

Sus.—For her sake, let me entreat you.

Vas.—I tell you what: I will take it to the king. It will relieve the sorrow into which the loss of Ságariká has plunged him. (Susangatá gives it to him, he looks at it attentively.) Why, where could she have procured such a valuable necklace?

Sus.—That excited my curiosity, and I asked her.

Vas.—And what replied she?

Sus.—She looked me in the face, and sighed, and said, Ah, Susangatá, it is now of no avail to tell my sad story—and then burst into tears.

Vas.—Although she has not confessed it, yet such an ornament is a proof that she belongs to some distinguished family. —Where is the king?

Sus.—He went from the queen's apartments to the crystal alcove. Do you go to him—I must to her majesty. (Exeunt severally.)

THE CRYSTAL ALCOVE.

(Vatsa discovered, seated.)

Vatsa.—Deceitful vows, tender speeches, plausible excuses and prostrate supplications had less effect upon the queen's anger than her own tears; like water upon fire, they quenched the blaze of her indignation. I am now only anxious for Ságariká. Her form, as delicate as the petal of the lotus, dissolving in the breath of inexperienced passion, has found a passage through the channels by which love penetrates, and is lodged deep in my heart. The friend to whom I could confide my secret sorrows is the prisoner of the queen; in whose presence can I now give vent to my tears?

Enter Vasantaka.

Vas.—Yonder is my friend, emaciate with care, but graceful still, radiant as the newly-risen moon. Health to your grace, fortune favors you. I have got out of her majesty's clutches, and these eyes have again the pleasure of beholding you.

Vats.—My friend Vasantaka, embrace me. (Embraces him.) Your dress declares you restored to the good graces of the queen. Tell me, what news of Ságariká. (Vasantaka hangs down his head.) I pray you speak.

Vas.—I cannot utter such unpleasant tidings.

Vats.—What tidings, speak? Alas, it is too plain, she is no more! Ságariká! (Faints.)

Vas.—(Alarmed.) My friend, revive—revive!

Vats.—(Recovering.) Leave me, existence—I willingly resign you—haste, or you will be forcibly expelled. Already is that graceful maid far off.

Vas.—You are alarmed unnecessarily. I was about to tell you, the queen has sent her to Ougein:—this I called unpleasant tidings.

Vats.—To Ougein! Ah, cruel Vásavadattá. Who told you this?

Vas.—Susangatá:—and more, she gave me this necklace to bring to your majesty. She knows why.

Vats.—To alleviate my despair; what else. Give it me. (Vasantaka gives him the necklace, which he applies to his heart.) This has once hung upon her neck, and is now far removed from her: it is a friend that shares a similar fortune with myself, and will speak comfort to my sorrows: wear it, my friend, that as it meets my gaze I may acquire fortitude.

Vas.—As you command. (Ties the necklace round his neck.)

Vats.—Alas, I shall never again behold my love.

Vas.—Speak not so loud—some one approaches.

Enter Vasundhará a female attendant, with a sword.

Vasundhará.—Glory to your majesty!—So please you, the

nephew of Rumanwán, Vijayavermá, desirous of communicating to you some acceptable tidings, is at the door.

Vats.—Let him enter.

Vasundhará goes out and returns with Vijayavermá.

Vijayavermá.—Glory to your majesty! Your majesty's fortune is propitious in the triumphs of Rumanwán.

Vats.—Are the Kosalás subdued?

Vij.—By your majesty's auspices.

Vats.—Rumanwán has well performed his task, and speedily achieved an arduous labor. Let me hear the circumstances of our triumph.

Vij.—On receiving your majesty's commands, the general of the state, Rumanwán, soon collected a mighty army of foot, and horse, and elephants, and marching against the king of Kosalá, surrounded him in a strong position in the Vindhya mountains.

Vats.—Proceed.

Vij.—Impatient of the blockade, the Kosalá monarch prepared his troops for an engagement.

Vas.—Your slowness sets my heart in a flutter.

Vij.—Issuing from the heights, the enemy's forces came down upon us in great numbers, and the points of the horizon were crowded with the array of mighty elephants, like another chain of mountains: they bore down our infantry beneath their ponderous masses: those who escaped the shock were transpierced by innumerable arrows, and the enemy flattered himself he had for once disappointed our commander's hopes. Fire flashed from the blows of contending heroes, helmets and heads were cloven in twain—the broken armor and scattered weapons were carried away in torrents of blood, and the defiance of the king of Kosalá, in the van of his army, was heard by our warriors; when——

Vats.—How! was our force discomfited?

Vij.—Our chief alone confronted him, and slew the monarch on his furious elephant with countless shafts.

Vas.—Victory! victory! we have triumphed!

Vats.—And honor to our gallant foe, the king of Kosalá; for glorious is the warrior's death when his enemies applaud his prowess. What next?

Vij.—Rumanwán then appointed my elder brother, Sanjayavermá, to govern the country of Kosalá, and making slow marches in consequence of the number of his wounded, returned to the capital. He is now arrived.

Vats.—Vasundhará, go apprise Yaugandharáyana to distribute the treasures of my favor.

Vasund.—You are obeyed. (Exit with Vijayavermá.)

Enter Kánchanamálá.

Kánchanamálá.—Glory to your grace! The queen sends you word that Samvarana Siddha, the magician, is arrived from Ougein: will your majesty be pleased to see him?

Vats.—By all means; I take much pleasure in this cunning —bring him hither. (Kánchanamálá goes, and returns with the magician, Samvarana Siddha, carrying a bunch of peacock's feathers in his hands.)

Kánch.—Here is the king.

Samvarana.—(Waving the feathers and laughing.) Reverence to Indra, who lends our art his name, and on whom Samvara and Vivara attend! What are your majesty's commands: would you see the moon brought down upon earth, a mountain in mid-air, a fire in the ocean or night at noon? I will produce them—command.

Vas.—My good friend, be careful,—take heed what sort of a person this conjurer may be.

Sam.—What need of many words? By the force of my master's spells I will place before your eyes the person whom in your heart you are most anxious to behold.

Vats.—Go, girl, to the queen, and tell her that as the magician is her servant, I do not wish to witness his performances alone, but will see them in her company.

Kánch.—She is here.

Enter Vásavadattá.

Vásavadattá.—(Apart to Kánchanamálá.) Girl, this man is from Ougein: think you he is a friend to me?

Kánch.—Fear not, madam, he is well disposed to your grace's family.

Vásava.—(Advances.) Victory to my lord!

Vats.—Come, madam, the sage promises much: let us behold his cunning. (Leads her to a seat and sits beside her.) Now, sir, display your power.

Sam.—You shall be obeyed. (Waves his plume.) Hari, Hara, Brahmá, chiefs of the gods, and thou their mighty monarch, Indra, with the host of heavenly spirits, Siddhas and Vidyádharas, appear rejoicing and dancing in heavens. (The king and queen look up and rise from their seats.)

Vats.—Most wonderful.

Vas.—Extraordinary, indeed!

Vásava.—Most strange!

Vas.—See, love: that is Brahmá throned upon the lotus.—That, Sankara with the crescent moon, his glittering crest—that, Hari, the destroyer of the human race, in whose four hands the bow, the sword, the mace, and the shell are borne.—There, mounted on his stately elephant, appears the king of Swerga: around them countless spirits dance merrily in mid-air, sporting with the lovely nymphs of heaven, whose anklets ring responsive to the measure.

Vásava.—It is very marvelous.

Vas.—(Apart.) The son of a slave—this conjurer!—what do we want with gods and nymphs—if he would treat us with a pleasant sight, let him show us Ságariká.

Enter Vasundhará.

Vasund.—So please your majesty, the minister Yaugandharáyana begs to inform you that the king Vikramabáhu has sent you, along with your messenger who returns, the counsellor Vasubhúti; be pleased to receive him, as the season is auspicious. Yaugandharáyana will also wait upon you as soon as he is at leisure.

Vásava.—Suspend this spectacle, my lord. Vasubhúti is a man of elevated rank: he is also of the family of my maternal uncle, and should not be suffered to wait: let us first see him.

Vats.—Learned sir, be pleased to repose awhile.

Sam.—(Waves the brush.) I obey. (Going.) But we have yet some sights for your majesty to behold.

Vats.—We will see them.

Vásava.—Make him a present, Kánchanamálá.

Kánch.—I shall, madam. (Exit with the magician.)

Vats.—(To Vasantaka.) Go and conduct Vasubhúti hither.

(Retires with the queen: Vasantaka goes out, and returns with Vasubhúti and Bábhravya.)

Vas.—This way.

Vasubhúti.—The avenues of this palace do in truth present a splendid scene. The eye is bewildered amongst the stately steeds and mighty elephants of war: the ear is regaled with harmonious sounds, and the heart is gratified by mixing with the throng of attending princes. The state of the king of Sinhalá is here effaced, and the magnificence of the entrance into every court betrays me into rustic admiration.

Bábhravya.—The idea of seeing my master again after so long an absence diverts my thought from every other object. Age and agitation together make my limbs tremble, my eyes are dimmed with involuntary tears, and I stutter and stumble in my speech.

Vas.—(In advance of them.) Come on, sirs.

Vasu.—(Observing the necklace.) Bábhravya, we should know that necklace: it was presented by the king to his daughter on her departure.

Bábh.—It is very like—shall I ask Vasantaka where he got it?

Vasu.—No, no; it is not very surprising that princely families should possess jewels of a similar appearance.

Vas.—The king,—advance.

Vasu.—Victory to your majesty!

Vats.—I pay you reverence.

Vasu.—Prosperity ever attend your highness!

Vats.—A seat for the minister.

Vas.—This is a seat. (Spreads his upper garment on the floor.)

Bábh.—Bábhravya pays his respects to your majesty.

Vats.—(Puts his hand on his shoulder.) Bábhravya, sit here.

Vas.—Minister, the Queen Vásavadattá.

Vásava.—I salute your excellency.

Vasu.—May your highness have a son like his father!

Bábh.—Madam, Bábhravya bows to you.

Vats.—Now, Vasubhúti, how is it with the sovereign of Sinhalá?

Vasu.—(Sighs.) I know not what reply to offer.

Vásava.—(Apart.) Alas! what can he have to communicate?

Vats.—What is the meaning of this concern?

Bábh.—(Apart to Vasubhúti.) It is useless to hesitate—say at once what must be said.

Vasu.—It is with difficulty, sir, that I can relate what has chanced, but thus it is. In consequence of the prophecy of the seer that whoever should wed Retnávalí, my master's daughter, should become the emperor of the world, your majesty's minister, as you are aware, solicited her for your bride unwilling, however, to be instrumental to the uneasiness of Vásavadattá, the king of Sinhalá declined compliance with his suit.

Vats.—(Apart to Vásavadattá.) What strange untruths are these, my love, your uncle's envoy relates!

Vásava.—I cannot pretend to judge, my lord, who is to be believed here.

Vas.—(To Vashubhúti.) Well, and where is the princess now?

Vasu.—My master, understanding at last that the queen was deceased, consented to give his daughter to Vatsa. We were deputed to conduct her hither, when, alas, our vessel was wrecked, and—(weeps).

Vásava.—Alas, unhappy that I am! Loved sister Retnávalí, where art thou, hear me and reply.

Vats.—Be composed: the fate that causes may remove our

sorrows. Have not these escaped? (Pointing to Vasubhúti and Bábhravya.)

Vásava.—Oh, that it may prove so, but fate is no friend to me.

(*Behind.*)—The inner apartments are on fire. The flames spread over the palace top a roof of gold; they wind around with clouds of smoke; they shed intolerable heat, and fill the female train with affright. Alas! the former false report that at Lávanaka the queen was burnt will now become a pitiable truth.

Vats.—(Starting up wildly.) Vásavadattá burnt to death! my queen, my love!

Vásava.—What extravagance is this—behold me at your side. But ah! help, help, my lord.

Vats.—(Embracing her.) Be calm, my love.

Vásava.—I think not of myself, but poor Ságariká. She is in bonds: my cruelty has kept her captive, and she will be lost without some aid—haste, haste, and save her!

Vats.—Ságariká in peril! I fly to her rescue.

Vasu.—What desperate purpose is this, Sir? the fatal folly of the moth.

Bábh.—Hear Vasubhúti, Sir.

Vas.—(Catching hold of his robe.) Forbear! this is madness.

Vats.—Let me go, fool! Ságariká will perish—think you I shall survive her?

Bábh.—What! shall the race of Bharata be imperilled for such trifling cause? But be that as it may, I will do my duty.

Vats.—Stop, thou devouring flame! withhold thy veiling smoke, as high in air thy circling brilliancy revolves—behold! I come to share the destiny of Ságariká. The fire nears the prison of the maid—I shall the more quickly discover her. (Rushes off.)

Vásava.—My inconsiderate speech has inflicted this anguish on my lord. I cannot bear his loss, and will follow.

Vas.—Wait, madam, I will lead the way. (Exit with the queen.)

Vasu.—Vatsa has precipitated himself into the flames. After having witnessed the fate of the princess, what remains but that I also offer up my life. (Exit.)

Bábh.—And must the race of Bharata thus causelessly perish?—But why do I delay—I will at least give proof of my fidelity. (Exit.)

THE PALACE ON FIRE.

Ságariká, in chains, discovered.

Ságariká.—The blaze encompasses me on every side: thanks, lord of flame, thou puttest a period to my sorrows.

Enter Vatsa.

Vats.—The light shows me Ságariká—'tis she, alone, without assistance.

Ság.—The prince! The sight of him inspires with me the nope of life. (Aloud.) Preserve me, Sire!

Vats.—Fear not: support one moment these investing vapors—ha! the scarf on your bosom is on fire. (Snatches it off.) Your fetters impede your path,—let me support you. Dearest, cling to me. (Takes her in his arms.) Already is the heat allayed,—be of good cheer: the fire cannot harm thee, love, whose very touch abates its intensity. (Pauses—looks round—closes his eyes and reopens them.) Why, what is this! where are the flames! they have disappeared, and there stands the palace unharmed! Ha! the daughter of Avanti's monarch!

Enter Vásavadattá, who runs into Vatsa's arms.

Vásava.—My dearest lord!

Enter Vasubhúti, Vasantaka and Bábhravya.

Vats.—My friends!

Vasu.—Fate is propitious to your majesty.

Vats.—This must have been a dream, or is it magic!

Vas.—The latter, no doubt: did not that conjuring son of a slave say he had still something for your majesty to see?

Vats.—(To the queen.) Here, madam, is Ságariká, rescued in obedience to your commands.

Vásava.—(Smiling.) I am sensible of your obedience, my lord.

Vasu.—(To Bábhravya.) That damsel is wonderfully like the princess.

Bábh.—So it struck me.

Vasu.—Excuse me, Sire, permit me, ask—whence is this maiden?

Vats.—You must ask the queen.

Vasu.—(To Vásavadattá.) Will your grace inform me?

Vásava.—Yaugandharáyana presented her to me, and told me she had been rescued from the sea: 'twas hence we designated her the Ocean Maid.

Vats.—(Apart.) Presented by Yaugandharáyana, and without mentioning it to me—what could have been his motive?

Vasu.—(Apart to Bábhravya.) The likeness—the necklace—the recovery of the damsel from the sea—leave no doubt that this is the daughter of the king of Sinhalá, Retnávalí. (Advances to her.) Lady Retnávalí, do I find you in this condition?

Ság.—(Looking at him.) Ha! the minister Vasubhútí!

Vasu.—I die! (Faints.)

Ság.—Unfortunate that I am, I perish: my beloved parents, hear me; reply to your child. (Faints.)

Vásava.—What! Bábhravya, is this my sister, Retnávalí?

Bábh.—It is.

Vásava.—Revive, dear sister, revive.

Vats.—Is this the daughter of Vikramabáhu, of the house of Udatta, the sovereign of Sinhalá?

Vas.—(Apart.) I knew this necklace was the property of no ordinary person.

Vasu.—(Recovering.) Revive, dear lady,—be composed; see how your elder sister grieves! Console her sorrows with your embrace.

Retnávali (*or Ságariká*).—I have offended the queen, how shall I look her in the face again!

Vásava.—Come hither, unrelenting girl—behold in me a sister! come to my arms. (As Retnávalí goes to embrace the queen, she stumbles. Vásavadattá apart to Vatsa.) My good lord, I blush for my cruelty. Quick! undo these horrible bonds.

Vats.—Be composed, I will remove them. (Takes the chains off Retnávalí's feet.)

Vas.—Yaugandharayána is most to blame for this; he must have known the truth, and yet said not a syllable to any one.

Enter Yaugandharayána.

Yaugandharayána.—The temporary absence of her husband and the contraction of marriage bonds with another wife cannot fail to be displeasing to the queen: she may thank me for these favors, and I am ashamed to face her. Yet I am confident she will forgive me, when she considers my motives, and will be well pleased that the king obtains by these means the sovereignty of the world. However, happen what may, duty to a master must be performed without regard to such considerations.—They are here: I will approach.—Glory to the king! Pardon me, Sire, if I have accomplished any object affecting your interest without previously consulting you.

Vats.—What have you done, inform us?

Yaugan.—Please your majesty to be seated and I will tell you. It was formerly announced to us by the holy Seer that the husband of the princess of Sinhalá should become the emperor of the world: we therefore earnestly applied to her father to give her hand to our sovereign; but, unwilling to be the cause of uneasiness to the queen, the monarch of Sinhalá declined compliance with our request: we therefore raised a report that Vásavadattá had perished by a fire at Lavanaka, and Bábhravya was dispatched with the news to the court of Sinhalá.

Vats.—I have heard what ensued. But why place the princess with the queen in so unsuitable a station?

Vas.—I can guess his object; he expected you would see her in the inner apartments, and take pleasure in her sight.

Vats.—Has Vasantaka stated your purpose correctly?

Yaugan.—Your majesty has said.

Vats.—I suppose, too, you had some concern in the appearance of the conjurer?

Yaugan.—What other means remained of restoring the damsel to your presence, or how else was Vasubhúti to have seen and recognized the princess?

Vats.—(To Vásavadattá, laughing.) Well, madam, it remains with you to say how we shall dispose of the sister you have acknowledged.

Vásava.—My lord, you might as well speak out, and say, make Retnávalí over to me?

Vas.—Your majesty very accurately conceives the minister's design.

Vásava.—Come, here, Retnávalí, appear as becomes my sister. (Puts on her her own jewels, then takes her by the hand and presents her to Vatsa.) Accept Retnávalí, my lord.

Vats.—(Taking her hand.) Who would not prize the favors of the queen?

Vásava.—And remember, my lord, she is far away from her natural relations; so treat her, therefore, that she may never have occasion to regret them.

Vats.—I shall obey.

Vas.—Victory to your majesty! The world is now in the possession of my friend.

Vasu.—Princess, pay respectful reverence to Vásavadattá. (Retnávalí bows.) Madam, you justly possess the title of queen.

Vásava.—(Embracing Retnávalí.) Glory to your majesty.

Vats.—My cares are all rewarded.

Yaugan.—What else can we perform to gratify your highness?

Vats.—What more is necessary? Vikramabáhu is my kinsman. Ságariká, the essence of the world, the source of universal victory, is mine, and Vásavadattá rejoices to obtain a sister. This be also my prayer: may Indra with seasonable showers render the earth bountiful of grain; may the presiding Brahmans secure the favor of the gods by acceptable sacrifices.

In connection with Hindoo literature, slight mention may here be made of that of Siam, as to which country the earliest record extends no further back than the fourteenth century, when was founded their first national capital, Ayuthia. There is in Siamese characters an abundance of metrical compositions containing legendary tales and romances, which have been closely studied. The subjects are chiefly taken from Hindoo epics, as in the case of the *Ramayana,* and occasionally from Malay or Javanese legend. The tendency of Siamese romantic poetry is to describe rather than invent, and there are depictions of scenery and places which are grand and striking, forming the choicest of their poetical conceptions. Their greatest blemish consists of tedious embellishments, with a tendency to gross and indecent allusions, from which few works are free. In miscellaneous literature there is a collection of more than two hundred elegant sayings, and fable is largely represented. The number of law-books is very considerable, treating on disputes, plaints and allegations, debt, marriage, criminal matters, abduction, slavery, inheritance and disputes connected with land. The royal edicts, consisting of thirty-six laws, deal with trial by ordeal of fire and water, laws of the palace, laws of the priesthood, offences against the king, offences against the people and rebellion. The section on slavery has been translated into English and was printed at Bangkok. As a curiosity, may be given an extract from a compendium relating to assaults. "A man who strikes another with a blank book shall be fined as though he had struck him with

his hand, but if the assault is committed with a book of the classics, he shall be fined twice as much as he would have had to pay for assaulting with a stick." In the legal lore of the Siamese, as in their legends and poems, are many other curiosities, of which space forbids further mention. While some of their poems are strongly dramatic in character, they know not the drama in its proper sense, and with their literature we need not further concern ourselves.

THE MARTYRDOM OF ALI.

FROM THE TAZIEH OR PASSION PLAY OF PERSIA.

(Translated by Col. Sir Lewis Pelly, K.C.B., K.C.S.I.)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ALI, Caliph.

ZAINAB, his Daughter.

KULSUM, his Daughter.

SPIRIT OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD.

THE ANGEL GABRIEL WITH TROOP OF ANGELS.

THE ASSASSIN, son of Muljam.

HASAN, son of Ali.

HUSAIN, son of Ali.

NA'MAN, the Surgeon.

ALI'S SERVANT.

Prelude.

The Tazieh, or Passion-Play of Persia, depicting the successive martyrdoms of Ali, Hasan and Husain, is a remarkable combination of religious fervor and dramatic art. The full performance occupies the afternoon and evening of ten successive days. If the success of a drama is to be measured by the effect it produces on the people for whom it is composed, no play has ever surpassed this long-drawn out tragedy. Apart from the oral delivery, it has never been published even in Persia. But Sir Lewis Pelly, who was for many years in the British diplomatic service there, engaged a man who had been a teacher and prompter of actors to collect and dictate all the scenes of this impressive tragedy. There were altogether fifty-two, and of these Sir Lewis Pelly had thirty-seven translated into English.

From this work we have selected the scene depicting the assassination of Mohammed's first convert, his cousin Ali, who had married his favorite daughter Fatimah. Ali, by his devout religious life, as well as his close relationship to the Prophet, should have been Mohammed's successor. But he was thrust aside by more ambitious rivals, who were also relatives. In

spite of his quiet submission, many Moslems refused to acknowledge the others as legitimate rulers. Eventually Ali was made Caliph, but two hostile sects had now been established, and his rule in turn was opposed. War broke out, and a band of fanatics resolved to slay Ali and his new rivals in order to quell the schism. Ali was killed as he was entering the mosque at Cufa, A. D. 660. A magnificent tomb was erected, and to this Meshed Ali pilgrimages were made, and memorial services held.

Ali's eldest son Hasan was chosen Caliph without opposition, but eight years later was poisoned. The religious feud continued, but Husain, the surviving brother, lived in retirement at Mecca. His partisans at Cufa summoned him to take his rightful place as Caliph, and he set out with a small body of relatives. They were stopped on their way and finally destroyed at Kerbela, A. D. 680. This series of quarrels, battles and deaths forms the groundwork of this famous passion-play, which usually opens with the Biblical story of Joseph and his brethren, and passes readily from earth to heaven, while the Prophet Mohammed dominates every scene.

THE MARTYRDOM OF ALI.

Ali.—(Addressing the Almighty.) O beneficent Creator! Lord of jinns and men! look upon thy humble servant Ali, who seeks continually for thy grace, and boasts of thy loving kindness and protection before the inhabitants of the world. I adjure thee, by those arms of mine which tore the dragon in pieces when I was yet an infant only four months old, and

lay in a cradle, to forgive the sins of my followers, the Shi'ahs, for whom I am greatly concerned, O ineffable Being!

Kulsum, his daughter.—(To his sister Zainab.) O thou queen of the palace of faith! thou most respected amongst the family of the Prophet! thou light of the eye of Zahrah, his daughter! may I be a ransom for thee! I intend to invite to my house to-night the king of men, the successor of the Prophet, the pillar of faith, Ali, our father. Tell me, may I be offered unto thee! what dost thou think of that?

Zainab.—Dear sister, thou light of my sorrowful eyes, what thou hast already said is quite right in itself. Our father is very kind to us, his afflicted daughters, and sympathizes with us in all our troubles and pains. Most certainly he will accept this thy request; go, then, and state it humbly to his lordship.

Kul.—(To Ali.) O light of nature's eye, may I be a ransom for thee! O glory of the inhabitants of the world, may I be a sacrifice for thee! O father, let it please thee to condescend to come to my humble hut this evening and partake of the same meal with me, thy broken-hearted daughter; rest in my eyes for awhile, as it were the light.

Ali.—May I be an offering for thy soul, O my chosen daughter! thou pacifier of my heart and light of both my eyes! Return home and prepare what thou hast got; but take care not to be extravagant in God's gifts. In the evening, when I shall have performed my duty to the Lord, I will come to the house of my well-behaved, beautiful-faced daughter, and take my first meal.

Kul.—Come to me, O my worthy sister of laudable character; for in a moment or two the glory of our father and his majesty will appear. Have the goodness to help Kulsum, thy favored sister, in preparing a repast agreeable to his blessed palate.

Zai.—May I be offered for thee, O my poor laboring sister! May I be a ransom for thee and for thy affecting condition, dear Kulsum. Be not troubled, sister; everything is quite ready for our father, even the bird of ours, if he should require to have it roasted. I am sitting here anxiously awaiting his ar-

rival, to see what time the lord of heaven and earth will arrive.

Kul.—(To Ali.) May I be a ransom for thee, O thou enlightener of heaven and earth! Thy poor daughter Zainab is in anxious expectation of thy coming. May it please thee to honor the humble hut of thy helpless, miserable daughter, Kulsum.

Zai.—Welcome, O glory of 'Irak and Hijaz! May the souls of Zainab and Kulsum be cast at thy holy feet! Think not that we two are thy dear daughters; God is the witness that we consider ourselves thy slaves. The dust of thy feet is the collyrium of Zainab's eyes. Come, take thy seat, thou king of noble birth; be pleased to pardon Kulsum's boldness for the trouble she has given thee, and condescend to eat what she has humbly set here before thee.

Ali.—(To Zainab and Kulsum.) O ye brightness of the eyes of Haidar the warrior! if you wish I should take my meal at this table, remove from it everything except bread and salt, and trouble me not to eat the other things.

Kul.—What has happened, O my chosen father, that thou art not inclined to eat anything? Why shouldst thou this very night, when it has pleased thee to honor me, be so much disturbed in thy mind?

Ali.—What shall I say, dear child, in answer to thy inquiry? Thy father is going to have an end of his sorrows. Seeing the time of my martyrdom is drawing very near, for this reason I do not feel inclined for any kind of food.

Zai.—If it be so, then it is better thou shouldst take a little rest. Come, sleep on in this bed which is spread for thee. The adversity of the journey to Nahrawan has broken thee down. Yea, afflictions of the age have rendered thy body extremely weak.

Ali.—(To his two daughters.) O my two afflicted daughters, whose eyes continually shed tears, you must go to bed, too, dear ones, and that this very moment; but mind to awake me early in the morning for prayer.

Kul.—(To Zainab.) My poor oppressed sister, may I be a ransom for thee! Come and sleep, O helpless, wretched

creature. Come and sleep, thou reflex of Fatimah, the best among women. May God never lessen thy shadow from our head!

The Prophet.—(Appearing to Ali in his dream.) This is a wonderful night; for when its evening shall be changed into morning, Ali's beard shall be stained with the blood of his head. To-night Zainab is sitting quite happy in the company of her father; but to-morrow she will be mourning over the dead body of a parent. Hasan and Husain are happy, but only for to-night; for to-morrow the dust of mourning shall sit on the head of both. O my dear cousin Ali, open thine eyes kindly toward me, before I suffer grievously from separation from thee.

Ali.—(In his dream, speaks to the Prophet.) O seal of the prophets of all ages, how unbearable is this separation! My soul has come to my lip owing to my earnest desire to see thee. After thy death, O Prophet of God, the wicked, through envy and hatred, agreed together to oppress me. They tied my hands behind my back, and broke the ribs of the Prophet's daughter, Fatimah. These hardships have made me miserable, and my patience has left me altogether. Graciously call me, O Prophet, to thyself; for thy cousin can no longer live in this world!

The Pro.—O Ali! O my sweet soul, awake a little! O Ali! O my former companion, awake a little! Open thine eyes and behold thy cousin, whom thou art desirous to see. Good luck is attending on thee at thy pillow; thou shouldst open thine eyes.

Ali.—Peace be on thee, O thou fountain of generosity and beneficence! Thou art welcome; may thy feet be placed on my tearful eyes! How strange it is that thou hast deigned to come and visit me. May my sweet soul become an offering to the earth of thy path! Think not, O Prophet, that I am a dear cousin to thee; I swear by the dust of thy feet that I am but thy slave.

The Pro.—On thee be peace, O my successor and cousin! On thee be peace, O thou my companion in all my afflictions and sorrows! Though my abode is now in the delightful garden of Paradise, yet Heaven without thy rosy cheeks is

but a prison to me. I am aware of thy condition, knowing well that since my death thou hast been tyrannized over by my cruel people. My heart is full of grief and sorrow on thy account; I cannot lift up my head before thee, nor open my eyes in thy presence, I am so much ashamed.

Ali.—O cousin, thy people, after thou wert gone, had no regard for thee. A certain dog stretched forth the hand of cruelty and injustice, and made a breach in thy house. He disregarded my nobility and merits, and took the Khalifat from me by force. He aimed at Ali's disgrace, in that he put a rope round my neck. He burned the door of thy house with fire, and in so doing grieved the holy children.

The Pro.—O Ali! Ali! I am undone! Complain no more, for I cannot bear to hear it. I am consuming away as a burning candle by reason of thy sad condition; I am terribly concerned on thy behalf. O Ali, I swear by the Lord, the Creator, the mighty God, that I am heartily weary of such people, who have not regarded nor honored thee. By the Lord, I am an enemy of such a nation. Be not sorry; I will advocate thy cause in the Day of Judgment.

Ali.—When thy feet, O Prophet, trod the threshold of Paradise, how shall I say what injustice and cruelty I afterward suffered? The burden of separation from thee has weighed so heavily on my heart as to make my groans reach the heaven of heavens.

The Pro.—Be not troubled any more, dear cousin, seeing that the end of our separation is near at hand; the dark night of sorrow is about to be followed by bright, pleasant morning. Sigh no more so deeply, nor shed tears so plentifully; the day of affliction draws to its close, and thy pain will obtain a cure.

Ali.—Say, O Prophet, who will help me in the matter? How long must I remain confined in this prison? At what time shall I be delivered from this despicable world and its vain toils? When shall I have the honor of being in thy company in heaven?

The Pro.—Be not impatient, for the day of separation is far spent; blessed fortune is going to appear. Thou hast but a brief time to sojourn in this perishable abode. My most wicked people, not regarding me at all, whilst thou art praying

shall smite thee on the head with a sword. This very night thy moon-like face shall be encompassed with a halo of blood. And shortly after thou shalt be with the Prophet, and in Paradise shalt enjoy the companionship of my child and virgin.

Ali.—This good news, O cousin, deserves that by reason thereof I should instantly cast my head at thy feet. Oh! I shall be delivered at once from many troubles and sorrows when I shall have closed my eyes forever on the things of this mortal life.

The Pro.—Sleep on, dear cousin, in thy bed, having laid thy head for awhile on my lap; for this is thy last slumber in the world, death having already laid wait for thee.

Ali.—(Awaking.) I was just now in the presence of Muhammad, the Prophet. Why was his glorious light removed suddenly from my sight? O Messenger of God, why didst thou not take me with thee on thy departure? Why should I continue in affliction and sorrow any longer?

Zai.—Again I hear my father's sad voice. I am much disturbed by the groanings of my parent to-night. O Lord God, what may be the cause of all this sighing and crying? The piteous cries of my father have made my soul reach the tip of my lip.

Ali.—This night has become almost a year in regard to length! Methinks the morning cocks have become dumb or the king of light must have trampled under foot the army of darkness.

Zai.—Oh! why does my father complain so much to-night in his bed? What has made him noisy like a ringing bell? O Lord, what shall I do to my poor father to keep him quiet? My heart is beating within me owing to his sad voice.

Ali.—O night, art thou not to be followed by happy morning? Why art thou unaware of my miserable condition? O sun, put forth thy face from behind the curtain. Ali is fully determined upon resignation and acquiescence.

Zai.—Oh! why does not my father sleep to-night? Why does he grieve my heart so much by his mournful utterings? He has nothing on his tongue but words of separation to-night. I fear the stone of his sorrow will one day break my wings.

Ali.—Show forth thyself, O sun, out of the bosom of the east, and be not sorry for Haidar's death. Shine on the surface of the dark world and make it bright, and care not so much about my murder.

Zai.—To-night my father's complaints are very bitter, his eyes tearful, and his face pallid. Why does he complain of the length of night? It would appear—God forbid!—he has some pain.

Ali.—Come out, O morning, from the bosom of the east, and be not sad owing to Haidar's murder. It is decreed that before dawn my head shall be cloven asunder with the stroke of a scymetar, and my moon-like face be washed with my own blood. But let God's will be done; it is for the Shi'ahs that I suffer all this.

Zai.—(Addressing Ali.) May I be a sacrifice for thee, O my chosen father! May my soul be a ransom for thee, O thou brightness of my two eyes! O thou heaven of glory, what has happened to thee that thou art so sad? Oh! tell me, thy poor daughter, why now thou lookest toward the earth, now toward heaven. At one moment thou sheddest tears down thy cheeks, at another thou bowest down and fallest prostrate on the ground.

Ali.—May I be a ransom for thee, my poor, sore-hearted daughter! In a few short hours I intend to have a journey to Paradise. The chosen one of the glorious God appeared to me in a dream and invited me to his happy banquet. The time has come that my beard shall be stained with my own blood by the cruel sword of the son of Muljam, the accursed wicked dog.

Zai.—May God never decree this, dear father! May I be offered unto thee! Never can people act so cruelly toward us! Thou art the asylum of the poor, the ointment of the wounded in heart. Why shouldst thou conceive a bad omen against thyself, dear father?

Ali.—Shed not tears down thy poor cheeks, O my daughter; grieve me not in so doing, dear child. Get me some water soon, that I may renew my ablutions, for the time of prayer is come; the dawn has appeared on the horizon.

Zai.—(Bringing water.) Come, here is water for the re-

newal of thy ablutions. Perform the ceremonies, thou Lion of the glorious Creator! Make thy ablutions. May the God of the world be thy refuge! May my midnight prayers direct thee in the right way!

Ali.—(Making his ablutions.) O great God, for the merits of Muhammad the Arabian, the king of thy prophets, the director of the right way, for this head of mine which shall be cloven asunder with the sword of tyranny, and for the sake of my body, which shall roll to-morrow in its own blood, forgive thou mercifully the sins of my Shi'ahs, and in the Day of Judgment pardon thou all them that love me. I am going now to the Mosque to perform my prayers and serve my Creator with supplication and intercession.

Zai.—O father, I most humbly entreat thee not to go to Mosque. Remain at home and perform God's service here.

Ali.—How can I forbear going to the Mosque, to serve there the Lord of all creatures? Whatever happens by God's decrees I cannot, dear child, but assent thereto.

Zai.—Order, then, O honorable father, please, my brothers Hasan and Husain to accompany thee whither thou goest, that they may defend thee, if necessary, from the mischief of the enemy during the hours of prayer.

Ali.—(About to depart.) Dear daughter, light of my tearful eyes, how can I take them with me? It is decreed, dear child, that my beard should be stained with the blood of my head in the Mosque, and I cannot avert it.

Zai.—May I be offered for thy elegant stature, O father! come, let me show my readiness to die for thee. How can I soothe the pain of separation from thee? How can I bear the hard calamity of being an orphan? If a thorn happens to prick thy foot unawares, I would rather have it in my eye than see it hurt thy foot.

Ali.—(To his water-fowls.) O ye water-fowls, why are you all so sad, and why put ye your heads under your wings mournfully? You seem to lament the death of some honorable creature—nay, by our Lord, ye are mourning for me!

Zai.—(To Ali.) May I be a ransom for thee, O thou central orb of the constellation of truth! pray tell me what art thou saying to the water-fowl? Why are they holding the skirts of

thy garment with their bills, and making such a sad noise at this time? They are all running round thee, and saying, "Ali, Ali!" They are encompassing thee around as holy pilgrims, hoping by thee to be made happy.

Ali.—The water-fowls of our house, dear child, are all mourning affectionately for me. It appears they have been informed of my approaching murder, and are, for this reason, holding the skirts of my garment.

Zai.—No doubt it is most ominous to keep water-fowls at home. They have, at any rate, brought innumerable evils upon me by their ill-luck. I am much troubled in mind at the ceaseless noise of these creatures, and shall therefore break their wings with stones, and turn them out from the house at once.

Ali.—Strike not, dear girl, the water-fowls of the household of faith. Pelt not stones at the nightingales of the garden of lamentation. Break not, dear daughter, the wings of these poor birds, these lapwings of the city of Saba.

Zai.—O what shall I do? the murder of my poor father is about to be accomplished, for birds and beasts are mourning for him. We shall, ere long, become fatherless in the world. O Lord God, look mercifully upon us.

Ali.—(In the Mosque, proclaiming for prayer.) God is great! God is great! God is great! God is great! I bear witness that there is no other God but God!

The Cursed Katamah.—My address is to thee, O son of Muljam the traitor, awake and arise quickly from thy sleep, for Ali has come most pompously to the Mosque. Dost thou not hear his proclamation for prayer? Hold this sword in thy hand, and run soon to the Mosque and kill Ali, if thou lovest me and intendest to make me glad and happy. Deliver me, my dear friend, from the great pain which troubles my heart, and render Fatimah's children fatherless at once. In no other way canst thou please me except in murdering the Prophet's successor. My heart will not rejoice until I see Hasan and Husain putting round their necks the shawl of mourning.

Ali.—(Finding the son of Muljam sleeping in the Mosque.) My address is to thee, O Ibn Muljam the traitor, awake thou

for the service of the great Lord! If I would I could put thee to shame by disclosing what thou hast concealed carefully under thy cloak. Arise from thy place, it is time for thee to be cheerful, for it is the night of my decease and the day of thy revelry.

Gabriel.—(To the Angels.) Be it known unto you, O ye heavenly hosts, that his lordship Ali, the Lion of God, has gone to the Mosque to pray. The sign of God's mercy has descended in the niche to offer his obedience to his Maker. Let us go down to imitate that high personage and offer our souls to the dust of his holy feet. It being the last prayer of the Lion of God on earth, let us descend once more, to take a lesson from him before we lose the opportunity.

The Angels.—Woe unto us! it is the last day of Ali's life! Alas! it is his final prayer! This very hour the sword of Muljam's son, the accursed, shall touch the crown of Ali's head. Whom shall we imitate hereafter in God's worship, seeing the first Imam is going to be killed? Come on, O ye angels, all of you; it is time to bid adieu to the king of true religion.

The Son of Muljam.—(Smiting Ali.) For the sake of Katamah, the cursed, treacherous woman, I strike on Ali's head, maliciously, the sword of cruelty!

Ali.—(Smitten down.) In the name of God, by his order, and in his way! O religion of the Messenger of God, Muhammad! the blessings of the Lord be on him and his family.

Angels announce Ali's Death.—Alas! alas! the high priest of God's religion has been murdered by the sword of the enemy! Alas! alas! the prince of the faithful has been cruelly slain! The successor of the chosen Prophet has been killed with the sword of injustice, and blood has gushed out of the Lion of God's head! Alas! alas!

Zai.—(Awaking.) O Lord God! what fire of tumult is flaming without! What news is this which has heaped up sorrows on my heart? Merciful God! what is this commotion among the angels of Heaven! Oh! their sighs and cries are disturbing my mind in a manner I cannot express! Methinks my poor father has suffered martyrdom; if so, Zainab is reduced to the lowest degree of misery.

Gab.—Be it known unto you, O ye household of faith, that Ali's spirit has flown like a bird to its heavenly nest in Paradise. A head, whose umbrella was the chapter of the Kur'an, entitled "The Sun," yea, such a glorious head has received from the sword of malice a blow of a nature to cleave it asunder like the bosom of a rosebud. He is like a red lily rolling in his own blood through the stroke of Muljam's son, the cruel unbeliever.

Zai.—(To Kulsum.) Woe unto me! What was the voice which reached my ear so suddenly? Is—God forbid!—the Lion of God slain? Come, dear sister, let us go lamentingly to Hasan and Husain's bed-room to awake them.

Kul.—(To Hasan.) O Hasan, may Kulsum be offered for thy head! awake thou! Thine enlightened father is slain; awake, dear brother!

Zai.—(To Husain.) O brother, thou brightness of my tearful eyes, awake from thy sleep! We have at length become fatherless; dear brother, awake!

Hasan and Husain.—Distressed sisters, why are you making such an ado? Wherefore do tears run down your cheeks? Dear sisters, your sighs and groans are burning my very inward soul. What is the cause of this mournful noise?

Zai.—Dear brothers, our father went to the Mosque to say his prayers and to bless the people. Now there reach my ears continually the voices of the holy ones of God, saying, "Ali is killed." They seem crying between heaven and earth, and saying plainly, "Ali, the high priest of religion, was killed in the general Mosque." It is better both of you should run to the sacred place and see what is become of our dear father there.

Has. and Hus.—Wo unto us! Why is our father wallowing in his blood? Why is the crown of our head fallen in the niche of prayer? Father, may we be offered for thy blood-stained face! May we be sacrificed for thy rose-colored, moon-like visage!

Ali.—Welcome, dear sons! do you come at such a time to see your father? The end of my troubles is at hand. The time has come that I should be saved from the miseries of this world, and go to Paradise to visit the Prophet of God.

You may take me home at once from the Mosque; there is no occasion for my miserable family to weep.

Has. and Hus.—(Together.) Alas! O our followers, Haidar is slain! The cup-bearer of the tank of Al Kausar is no more! Mourn on, O ye mourners; for thy sons have become orphans!

Zai.—(To Ali.) May I be a ransom for thee, O thou lion of the thicket of God's creation! May the soul of Zainab be offered a sacrifice for thine! What cruel, irreligious infidel has smitten thee with the sword on thy holy head? Open thine eyes compassionately on us, for God's sake, and for the afflicted soul of Zainab, thy daughter.

Ali.—Be not sorry, dear child, on account of my martyrdom; for so was it decreed as regards me that I should thus be killed. Lamentations and weepings do not avail me at all. Do something, if thou canst, to alleviate awhile my pain.

Zai.—(To Hasan and Husain.) O ye two princes, may I be a ransom for your souls! Prepare black cloths for me that I may put them on. The king of the throne of the Imamat is leaving the world forever; make ready for him funeral garments and things pertaining to mourning. I am about to rend my clothes in pieces through excess of sorrow. Oh, what am I to do? My father is going out of my reach so suddenly.

Kul.—(To Hasan and Husain.) O ye brightness of the eyes of the age! O ye plants of the rose-garden of Ali, dear Hasan and Husain, behold in what state the pillar of faith, our father is. Run and call for him Na'man, the surgeon, that he may see the wound of the supporter of religion; peradventure he may be able to cure him.

Has. and Hus.—(To Na'man.) We beseech thee, for God's sake, O Na'man, to come to our house and see how the Lion of God, the king of men, feels. Look pitifully on the sad state of us, the orphans of the pillar of faith, and treat the wound of Ali, the royal priest.

Na'man, the Surgeon.—May I be a ransom for you, ye two tender plants of the Prophet's garden; ye ornaments of the bosom of Muhammad, the Arabian. Be not grieved, O ye Hasan and Husain! I am coming just now to treat Haidar the warrior's wound. Go ye in haste to that king of piety; I am coming after you to see if I can cure him.

Has.—(To Zainab.) O dear sister, sadly afflicted with grief by reason of thy father's mortal wound, go on one side, and hide thy face carefully, for a stranger is about to enter. Behold, Na'man is coming to examine the wound of Haidar the brave.

Na'm.—O ye chosen family of the Messenger of God, peace be on you! O ye household of the elect of God, peace be on you! Ye tender plants of the rose-garden of religion, drooping from the blast of the tempest of God's decree, peace be on you!

The Family.—O thou votary of the law of God's Apostle, on thee be peace! O thou lover of the possessor of the crown and standard, on thee be peace! See, O Na'man, how the blooming garden of faith has suddenly withered through Time's unjust proceedings! Have thou mercy on us poor children, and treat well the mortal wound of the model of piety.

Kul.—O surgeon, for the sake of the living God and Judge, see the wound of the head of my father, the cup-bearer of Kausar! Look if his wound be mortal, for I am very anxious for my dear father. If I hear good news from thy mouth, I will go to thy children and show my readiness to bear their painful calamities.

Zai.—O Na'man, I adjure thee by the veracity of Muhammad, the chief of God's religion, to pity me, a sad, miserable creature, and to lay my desponding soul under a great obligation to thee, by treating my father. Take me as one of thy slaves bought with money, and pity me. Do it for God's sake, and have compassion on me and these poor children. I am still in mourning for Zahrah, my mother; how can I bear the additional burden of separation from my father?

Na'm.—(To Ali.) Peace be unto thee, O glory of heaven and earth! O Imam of the two worlds, and director of the followers of truth! Why is thy face immersed in blood? Why should the phenomenon of the moon's splitting be reproduced in thy forehead? Who has felled the tree of faith to the ground? Who has plunged in blood the pilot of the deluge?

Ali.—What shall I say, O Na'man? Alas! when I went to the Mosque, and stood up there for prayer, toward the niche of faith, as soon as I fell prostrate on the ground, the cruel

sword of the traitor alighted on my head whilst thus bowing myself, and cut down as far as my forehead.

Na'm.—(Probing the wound.) Alas! let me see what heaven, the supporter of the faithful, has done to the noble cousin of the Prophet? Alas! alas! mayest thou be subverted, O heaven! Mayest thou be plunged in the ocean of blood like the head of the Lion of God! For the pate of Ali, the equal of Aaron, the son of Imran, is cloven asunder, and the unjust blow has reached down to the forehead.

Has.—I adjure thee by the living God, O Na'man, to cure the wound of our father, the priest of the age. Let not the two tender plants of Ali be rooted up by overwhelming sorrow, but deliver them from the bonds of desolation, if thou canst.

Na'm.—(To the family.) Wash your hands at once of Haidar's life; have no more hope of his recovery. Ali will be but for one hour more with you, his dear ones. O children of the Lion of God, you will ere long become fatherless. Read the Kur'an over your father, for he is gone. Prepare for him winding-sheets, and do not leave him alone. Tell Zainab to put on black and mourn for her father.

Ali's Family.—(Crying and lamenting.) Make us not fatherless, O Lord, O God! Shall we be orphans and sorrowful ones, O Lord, O God? Take our souls instead of his, O Lord, O God! Make us not tearful-eyed, O Lord, O God!

Ali.—(To his family.) O my poor, sad family, gather ye yourselves together around me, like the constellation of Pleiades about the moon; and you, O brightness of my eyes, Hasan and Husain, come near me for awhile, dear sons; and come thou, Zainab, my daughter, see thy father's face, for the time has arrived that thou shouldst put on black on account of my death.

Has.—May I be offered unto thee, O thou glory of the people of the age! I am Hasan, thy poor orphan son. Thou art greatly desirous to go to Paradise, the abode of the just, and hast, therefore, forgotten us altogether.

Ali.—O thou tender plant of the garden of Time's glory, thou brightness of my tearful eyes, Hasan, come to me, that I may commit unto thee the secret knowledge of the Imamat,

or priesthood. Come, let me put my lips to thy delicate lips, and deliver the mystery of religion in this way to thy heart. Thou art the guide of men after me, O my successor! Perform the rites of Imamat for the people after my departure.

Has.—What shall I, thy oppressed son, do when thou art taken away from us? To whom shall I look hereafter for comfort and solace? May Hasan be offered for thy parched throat, O father! Come, let me put my lips to thine as thou didst order me to do.

Ali.—Oh, my poor, helpless, weeping family, leave me alone in the room for awhile; for I have to speak my secrets to my Creator, and make supplication to him, before I leave this world.

Has.—O ye, my brothers and sisters, go out all of you from this room, with tearful eyes, and let everyone put a copy of the Kur'an on his head, and pray earnestly to the holy Creator for the recovery of our father and protector.

Ali.—O thou beneficent Creator, the sole, the almighty God, I adjure thee by thine own glory, O thou who art without any equal, and by that pearl-like tooth of thy chosen and glorious Prophet, which was knocked out with a stone in the battle of Ohod; and by the disappointment of his child, Fatimah, and by the fracture which she suffered in her side; and by the tearful eyes of his distressed family; and, lastly, by this blood-stained beard of mine, to forgive, O eternal, ineffable Maker, the sins of Ali's followers in the Day of Judgment. Now I depart this life with the desire of meeting the Messenger of God in the next world. I do therefore bear witness that there is no God except God. (Dies.)

Zai.—(Perceiving that Ali is dead.) Why has thy mouth ceased from speaking, dear father? Has heaven thrown black dust on our head to make us miserable? Alas! his honor, the Lion of God, has departed this life! He is gone to the garden of Paradise to visit Zahrah! Dear ones, inform Ali's afflicted servant of his master's death, that he may cover Haidar's mule, "Duldul," with black.

Has. and Hus.—(Together.) Come, let us put shawls of mourning round our necks. Come, let us groan and make a sad noise. Come, dear sisters, dutifully close our father's eyes.

Zai. and Kul.—(Together.) Alas! our father is, after all, gone! Alas! he is gone as an arrow out of our hand! Come, let us put on black; let us dishevel our hair over his corpse.

Ali's Servant.—(Leading the mule, "Duldul," draped in black.) Oh! they have killed the owner of "Duldul," Ali, the prince of believers! Alas! they have slain the chief, the Lion of the Lord of all creatures! The master of the crown and standard has suffered martyrdom by the sword of Muljam the traitor! They have destroyed the all-wise successor of the chosen of God.

Has. and Hus.—O "Duldul" of our lord, where is our father and thy master? Where is our chief and our prince? Where is our dear supporter and protector? Where is the lustre of the Prophet's religion? Where the husband of Zahrah the virgin? O poor creature, thy master has been killed by the insensate populace.

While the above play deals with heroes and not with divinities, it was to the Persians in the nature of a religious drama, for Ali was considered as almost of divine origin, not only for his devout, religious life, but as the cousin and son-in-law of Mahomet. The Persian poetry of the seventh century was essentially mystic in character, and of this school Firdausi was the prophet. In the Shâhnâma Sufic pantheism tends to reconcile philosophy with revealed religion and centres in the universality and absolute unity of God, who is diffused through every particle of the visible and invisible world. To him the human soul, during her temporary exile in the prison-house of the body, strives to get back through successive stages till she is sufficiently purified to be again absorbed in Him. This is hinted at in numerous verses of the Persian *Book of Kings*, in which the poet cries out against the vanity of all earthly joys

and pleasures, and expresses a passionate desire for a better home, for a reunion with the Godhead. The most remarkable passage is that which describes the mysterious disappearance of Shah Kaikhosrau, who suddenly, when at the height of earthly fame and splendor, renounces the world in utter disgust, and carried away by his fervent longing for an abode of everlasting tranquillity, vanishes forever from the midst of his companions. In the *Speeches of Birds*, an allegorical poem interspersed with moral tales and pious contemplations, the final absorption of the Sufi into the Deity is most ingeniously illustrated, and the seven valleys through which the birds travel on their way to the fabulous phœnix, or simurg, are the seven stations of the mystic road that leads from earthly troubles to the much-coveted Nirvana. As a believer in this system we can easily account for the philosophy of Ali, who in the drama is perfectly reconciled to death.

THE ALCHEMIST.

A PERSIAN COMEDY OF THE PRESENT DAY.

BY MIRZA FATH-ALI AND MIRZA JA'AFAR.

(*Translated into English by Guy LeStrange, M.R.A.S.*)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MULLÁ IBRÁHÍM KHALÍL, of Kaldak, the Alchemist.

MULLÁ HAMÍD, of Sámúk, his Assistant.

DARVÍSH 'ABBÁS, his Servant.

HÁJÍ KARÍM, the Goldsmith.

AGHÁ ZAMÁN, the Doctor.

MULLÁ SALMÁN, a learned man.

MASHADÍ JABBÁR, the Merchant.

SAFAR BEG, a Landed Proprietor.

SHAIKH SÁLIH, of Khachmaz.

HÁJÍ NÚRÍ a Poet.

Prelude.

This Persian comedy was published at Teheran in 1874 by Mirza Ja'afar. It is really a translation from a Turkish original, written by Mirza Fath-Ali in 1861. It presents a picture of the Mohammedan life of to-day, for the belief in alchemy and astrology is still strong among people of that faith. As regards the titles of the dramatis personæ, it may be noted that Mulla means a Mohammedan preacher; Darvish, a monk; Haji, one who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca; Agha, a captain; Mashadi, a gentleman; Safar, a squire; Shaikh, the chief of a tribe.

THE ALCHEMIST.

ACT I.

The scene is laid at the house of Haji Karim, the Goldsmith. He has invited friends to meet Shaikh Salih, who has lately arrived in the town of Nakhu. Haji Nuri, the Poet, who has not been invited, by accident comes in also. The company are seated, dressed in their every-day clothes. Shaikh Salih wears a turban and holds in his hands a long chaplet of beads, which he twirls between his fingers.

Karim, the Goldsmith.—Do your worships know why I have invited you here?

Jabbar, the Merchant.—No, not at all.

Kar.—I have some fresh news to give you. They say that Mulla Ibrahim, of Kaldak, who went to Tiflis to obtain his authorization, has returned and set up his tent in the Khachmaz Hills, where he practices alchemy. For instance, he has pared a substance which they call the elixir, and when he puts a drachm of this into a stone-weight of brass, it turns to pure silver.

Zaman, the Doctor.—I, too, have heard of this.

Kar.—Shaikh Salih, with his own eyes, saw how the Armenians of Iklis brought in twenty-five thousand stone-weight of copper coin, and received therefor from Mulla Ibrahim Khalil half a ton of silver and carried it away. Is not this so, O Shaikh?

Salih.—Yes, truly, by the Kuran which I study! I saw it with my own eyes. And every one who brought Mulla Ibrahim Khalil his coin received and carried off double the weight in ingots of pure silver.

Beg, the Land-owner.—Why should not we, too, then go and get some?

Salman.—Although I keep no actual cash, yet as I am a friend of Haji Rahim, the money lender—if you are satisfied with a loan for a year at 12 per cent. interest and will give proper security—I can get from him both for you and for myself as much money as we like.

Jab.—I, myself, Mulla, have money; but it is all out in business, and it is very difficult to get it back in hand so quickly. So, if it be possible, get me, too, a thousand stone-weight of copper,—I have two shops that I will leave in pledge for it.

Kar.—Get another thousand stone, as well, for me. I will give a mortgage on my house.

Zam.—And another thousand for me; and my wife's garden shall be the pledge.

Beg.—And let him give me, too, a thousand; and let my village stand in pledge to him for it.

Nuri, the Poet.—(Suddenly pulling a paper out of his pocket.) Your worships, it's a fine subject, that of the Lezgi Avars, under the leadership of Khan Butai, who came some

sixty years back and raided Nakhu. I have set it to verse. Now listen while I read it, and you will note how eloquently and rhetorically I have turned it.

Zam.—Fie! Haji Nuri! Is this a fit time for declaiming poetry? We assemble to talk and take counsel, and then here comes a man who begins, "I have put into verse the events of sixty years ago—how the Lezgis came and how they went!" What interest has all this for us?

Nuri.—(Vexed.) "What interest has it for us?" You will see what misfortunes the Lezgis at that time brought down on your ancestors' heads, and what inhumanities they perpetrated And is the knowledge of past events of no interest to you?

Kar.—(Soothingly.) Now, Haji Nuri, this is not exactly the time for reading poetry; another day, at your leisure, you can read it to us. At present, look here and tell us whether or no you think it advisable this going to Mulla Ibrahim Khalil and this buying of silver. Does not your good sense approve of this business?

Nuri.—(Sullenly.) Not at all.

Salm.—And for what reason?

Nuri.—For this reason, that each one's profession must be for him his own elixir, and his means of livelihood: so what need is there to go running after alchemists? I have not seen Mulla Ibrahim Khalil, but I know by experience that he is just setting up a shop for befooling people. Even though he has been to Tiflis, as 'tis said, who is it that has given him permission to practice alchemy? Who has seen his alchemy? There can be no elixir in this material world. But this Shaikh Salih, who comes from Khachmaz, has bereft you of your wits to such a point that you believe his words, and so will not give credence to anything that I may say.

Kar.—But there is proof that a great deal of elixir exists in this material world, and so there is no need of discussing that matter. But just you prove in what way each one's profession is to be his elixir! Why, here I am a goldsmith, and I am unable to make sufficient for my daily expenses!

Nuri.—Because you have lost credit with people, and so no one will confide his business to you. In times back, what-

ever gold or silver they brought to you to work up into ornaments, you stole more than half of it, and supplied the place with brass or copper, and so returned it to the owner. At last your tricks were exposed to the light of day, and now nobody brings his business to you. Had you acted honestly, you would assuredly have been a rich man by to-day.

Zam.—Well, and why am I without means?

Nuri.—Because you have abandoned your proper profession and gone into a business that you know nothing about. Medicine was not your profession. Your father, Ustad Rahman, the barber, by means of his hone and his razor, accumulated a reasonable fortune, which you have spent. The worthy man had, with immense pains, taught you to be a good barber. But you were not content with this. You wanted, after the fashion of the Tiflis barbers, to have a reputation as a doctor. But, after killing a whole graveyard full of men, people have got to understand your method, and now keep away from you. At present you are neither barber nor doctor. How often have I not advised you to go to the Russian doctors, and learn from them the medicines for fever, and leave off giving melon-water as the sole remedy?—but you never will listen.

Zam.—(Apologetically.) They told me that the Russian doctors use bread and sol as the remedy for fever. I have inquired of those who know the Russian language as to what sol is. They say "salt." But can salt be the specific against fever?

Salm.—(Stopping Zaman's mouth.) For Heaven's sake, don't talk and make an exhibition of your folly. That salt is quite different from this salt. (Turning to Nuri.) According to what you have been saying, Haji Nuri, I at any rate ought to have become a Karun (millionaire). Now, why is it that I only possess a mat and a water-jar?

Nuri.—That, too, has its reason. Just because your build would fit you so well to be a muleteer, it has, forsooth, got into your head that your father having been a Mulla, therefore you must be a Mulla, too. Your father had studied, and, having ability, had risen to be a Mulla, but you, who are not capable of writing your own name, even, how can you become a teacher and preacher? Ability is not like the father's fur coat,

which comes down by inheritance to the children. And therefore it is that you are not esteemed among the people. And how should you become rich? Why, if with your strength and your stature you had only taken to being a muleteer, you would barely have been content with gaining your hundred and fifty roubles a year by this time!

Beg.—And why am I not rich?

Nuri.—You own land, and you should get your wealth by attending to the sowing and the reaping. But you, to your loss, have given yourself up to idle talk, throwing yourself first into this matter and then into that; speaking evil of people behind their backs, and worrying the Government officials with silly petitions about evil-doers and oppressed innocents. At last, having let your pen run riot, you were for three years in the clutches of the law, and then three years more spending great sums of money to get free. So your life has been passed. And now you expect to get rich all of a sudden through this lying alchemist! Just like Mashadi Jabbar there, who, in his excess of cupidity, lent out his petty scrapings to people at an exorbitant interest so as to become a capitalist, all in a minute; but now he would be well content if he could only once more lay his hands on the principal.

Kar.—Well, master Poet, even granting that all of us have made mistakes, and have not made full profit each by his trade: still you yourself do not seem to get any very agreeable income from your own profession! If you get your dinner, you go without your breakfast! If you get your breakfast, you go without your dinner! According to what you have said, your talent—which is to make verses—ought to become the great elixir in your case, too?

Nuri.—Yes; my talent in truth should be the elixir. But just as you say that, for the elixir you were talking of, it is necessary to have base metal on which it may exert its potency,—even so, in the matter of my talent, it is likewise necessary to find men of taste and culture and understanding, in order that the grandeur of my verses may be appreciated. But seeing that through my evil fortune I find myself in the midst of such fellow-townsmen as you are, without intelligence or culture, and with neither taste nor appreciation, what gain

could there be expected from a talent such as mine? and what can my poetry avail me?

Kar.—How he does blunder! What rubbish he talks! Who invited you to come and give advice to all of us here? And look, now, where have you got all this philosophy of yours? Be off outside, for we don't want your advice.

The other Guests.—(All together.) Get up and go! We don't need your advice!

Nuri.—(Picking up his paper of verses in a hurry and putting it under his arm.) I'm off—words of truth are bitter. (Exit.)

Kar.—Well, your worships, we are all agreed. The money must be ready by the beginning of next week, and then we will set off by road to the Khachmaz Hills, and present ourselves before Mulla Ibrahim Khalil.

The Guests.—(All together.) Yes, we are all agreed.

ACT II.

The scene is laid in the Khachmaz Hills. In a level meadow among the foot-hills two tents are pitched. On a lower level stands a four-walled hut of wood, in the interior of which is seen a large forge. Near the forge are the bellows, and all around are lying fractured ingots of brass. In front of one of the tents is a smaller hut. Above, the meadow runs up into the mountains, which are snow-capped. On the further side is seen a valley, and a small river flows through it, on either side of which are oak and hazel trees. On the other side to the meadow a spring gushes from a stony basin and flows down toward the valley. Mulla Ibrahim Khalil occupies one of the tents, and in the other is Mulla Hamid, his assistant. In the smaller hut is his servant, Darvish Abbas, seated amongst the tools and utensils. Mulla Ibrahim Khalil, the alchemist, coming out of his tent, calls toward that of Mulla Hamid. Hamid goes to him and stands respectfully before him.

Ibrahim.—Mulla Hamid, according to what Shaikh Salih wrote, ought not those people from Nakhu to arrive here in the afternoon to-day?

Hamid.—Yes, master; or even earlier.

Ibr.—When these people come, Mulla Hamid, pay them every respect. Make them take a seat in the tent, and inquire after their health. Ask them why they have come, and if they say that they have brought copper coin and want to buy silver, then answer them, "My master gave all the silver of the last melting to the Armenians of Iklis, and the silver of this next melting, too, which we have now in hand, he has already disposed of to them. Further, it requires a month to complete the preparation of the elixir for this second melting. You have therefore given yourselves the trouble to come quite uselessly, for my master will neither receive the copper money from you nor give you silver in return." And then, if they want to see me, say further to them, "My master is in retirement during three days for meditation, and is now occupied with his prayers; therefore, for three days it is impossible for him to receive people or answer inquiries."

Ham.—Why do you tell me to do this, master? If I talk to them in this manner it is very probable that they will take their money and go away with it.

Ibr.—You are a wondrous idiot! Are you going to teach me the ways of the people of Nakhu? Why, if you killed them they would not leave this place without having seen me and given me the money; so go and do exactly as I have told you. (He returns to his own tent.)

Ham.—(After him.) On my eyes be it, master!

(Time passes, and it is now but two hours to sunset. The people of Nakhu appear, and Mulla Hamid advances to meet them.)

The Nakhu people.—Peace be on you!

Ham.—The peace be upon you. You are welcome! What delight you give me! Be pleased to take your repose in the tent.

One of the Nakhu people.—We were very desirous of seeing

you. Is your health good? Is your nose fat? (This means "Are you well?")

Ham.—Praise be to Allah! In such a pleasant, cool spot as this, how could my nose be otherwise than fat? Particularly, too, in the service of such a great man as Mulla Ibrahim Khalil!

One of the Nak. peo.—Ah well, one often finds places as pleasant as this; but so great a man as Mulla Ibrahim Khalil one does not come across everywhere! Can we to-day have the honor of visiting his worship?

Ham.—Our master has gone into retirement for three days, and is taken up with his devotions. It is impossible for him during these three days to give an interview to any one, or to talk, or to come out. But you can see him at the end of three days. And now be pleased to tell me the purpose of all the trouble you have given yourselves. Is it merely to make a visit to his worship, or have you some other matter, too?

One of the Nak. peo.—In the first place, our sole aim is to visit his worship! But secondly, each of us has brought a trifling donation to offer to him, and if he will accept it, perchance he will not be stinting to us of his favor!

Ham.—Well I understand. No doubt you have brought copper money, and you want to buy silver. Now, the truth of the matter is that our master, Mulla Ibrahim Khalil, will not take the money from you. The silver that came from the last melting, and also all that which is now under our hands, is already disposed of to the Armenians of Iklis, and for the double weight of silver that is to be given a single weight of copper coin has already been received by us. And still another month must pass before the completion of the elixir for this second melting. Under these circumstances, it is impossible for our master either to receive your money or to give you silver. Especially since the applicants for silver have become so numerous that the silver of each month's melting is sold a month in advance.

One of the Nak. peo.—Our feelings of devotion to our master, Mulla Ibrahim Khalil, have nothing to do with the fact of others being his humble servants, too! If we could only see him, his very self, all would be quite right!

Ham.—In that case you must have patience for three days, until the time of our master's retirement has drawn to an end. You shall be my honored guests for three days!

The Nak. peo.—Very well! Certainly!

(Darvish Abbas appears out of his hut. He is a man of about thirty, with long hair, yellow complexion and scanty beard. He is tall, wears the conical cap and a leopard-skin over his shoulders; he has a horn for blowing, and under his arm he holds a red-feathered fowl. Intoning in a terrific voice the words, Ya Hu, Ya Hakk! meaning "O He, Allah the Only One, O the Truth!" he marches up behind the tents and drives a tent-peg into the ground. Thrice he blows his horn, and the echoes come back from rock and hill. Then he fastens the cock to the tent-peg, and declaims in a loud voice:)

'Tis a fair day of springtide, arise! and enjoy what the day bringeth forth,
Rely not on days yet to dawn, or that springtide will come back again.
But arise now! and count as thy gain the breath of this soft vernal breeze,
The bright, tuneful song of the bird, the perfume so sweet of the flower,
In the sight of the man that is wise, who regardeth the leaf of the tree,
Each leaflet is truly a page proclaiming aloud the Creator.

(He blows again three blasts on the horn, then spreads the leopard-skin on the grass about ten paces from the cock, and once more chanting in a loud and terrific voice, Ya Hakk! Ya Hu! takes his seat on the skin, squatting with his knees up under his armpits. The Nakhu people have rushed out of the tent, and thunderstruck stand witnessing the strange scene. When the echoes have died away they turn to Mulla Hamid.)

One of the Nak. peo.—Mulla Hamid, who is the Darvish? and what is this cock?

Ham.—(Laughing heartily.) Ha! ha! ha! Ha! ha! ha!

Yes, yes! You have every right to ask the question, for you simple people are ignorant of the secrets of science, and unlearned in its methods. That grass there is a major ingredient in the elixir, and it is only to be found in these hills. No one besides Mulla Agha Ibrahim Khalil is capable of recognizing it. But according to the assertion of the Greek sages, it must grow while the cock is crowing. So it is the duty of Darvish Abbas each night to take the cock, and, after performing the ceremonies which you have just now witnessed, to tie the bird up in a new place, and then he must watch from sundown to dawn to keep off the jackals and foxes. Thus, while by night the cock crows, the grass for the elixir at the same time grows. In the book of "The Wonders of Wondrous Matters" it is plainly indicated that for the service of guarding the cock, only a Darvish, and men of no other condition, may lawfully be employed.

The Nak. peo.—Allah is great! All praise be to him!

ACT III.

The scene is inside the tent of Mulla Ibrahim Khalil. Ibrahim is discovered kneeling on his prayer-carpet, his turban is on his head, and in his hand a chaplet of a thousand beads. He mutters his prayers. Hamid stands facing him, with his arms crossed.

Hamid.—Master, be pleased to give your commands. Shall I introduce the guests to your presence?

Ibrahim.—Well, yes; go and call them.

(Mulla Hamid makes an inclination, leaves the tent, and returns accompanied by the people of Nakhu, introducing them into Ibrahim Khalil's presence.)

The Nakhu people.—Peace be on you!

Ibr.—(Blandly smiling, slowly rocks his body from side to side while turning the beads of his chaplet.) And on you be the peace! You are welcome. You have brought joy in putting yourselves to the trouble of coming. (He moves to make room for them, and then motions them to be seated.)

One of the Nakhu people.—(After taking his seat.) For us to pay a visit to one so great as your worship is not trouble, but rather cause of ease and felicity to us!

Ibr.—(With affected humility.) My assistant, Mulla Hamid, has already assured me of your excellent dispositions. I also was extremely desirous of seeing you. But as to the matter in hand, by Heaven! I hardly know what to do, and assuredly I shall be put to shame before you! From Mulla Hamid's report I conclude that you have brought copper coin, wishing to purchase therewith silver.

The Nak. peo.—Yes, master, so please you that your favor may be ours!

Ibr.—By Allah! Alas that I should be put to shame before guests so dear to me as you are! But the buyers of silver are so numerous! And every month, giving money for the following month, they buy in advance the silver of the next melting. Why, the silver of the last melting, and this, too, that is now under our hands, has already been bought by the Armenians of Iklis. And the silver that will be produced by the elixir in the melting to be completed at the end of the month, that, too, the Jews of Vartash have got by their begging and bothering, and they are gone off, near by, to bring the copper coin. I had not yet told Mulla Hamid of it, for he is not very fond of the Jews. But I must show them some kindness, for their village is near here, and they do me many services.

Ham.—(Interrupting.) Master, these——

Ibr.—Be silent!—In short, those who desire silver have reached such a number that they give me no leisure in which to find time for the preparation of the elixir. For in order to prepare the ingredients for the elixir these must be set, for the space of twenty days, in a pot made of luting-clay, to soak in spirit of sulphur, and each day a certain fixed quantity of fresh spirit of sulphur must be introduced. Then, after this, the ingredients must remain, for ten consecutive days, in an alembic and retort, covered with roseatic acid, and every other day the roseatic acid must be changed and fresh added. After the termination of this portion of the preparation, the ingredients of the elixir must be brought to the full term of its concoction by incident of igneous heat, in a crucible made of

luting-clay. After a space of three sidereal hours, following on the admixture of certain other secret ingredients of a foreign nature, it then first presents an appearance of melting, subsequently coagulates, and finally becomes stable in the form of a soft-substanced body. Elixir gets its name because of its action on the baser ores. Thus, for instance, when brass that has been melted has a certain measured portion of elixir mixed in with it, it turns into pure silver. This is my art, but foolish men, as I am assured, have been spreading abroad on all hands that I work miracles and have received a revelation. I am no such person. I am but a simple man, who seeks for the companionship of the pious, and strives for the doing of good deeds, firstly through the grace of the Almighty Creator, and secondly by means of researches and profound investigations which I have made in the science of alchemy. Through the experiments which now for some time I have been conducting in the philosophical sciences, and while searching out the secrets of the natural world, I have become acquainted with the full particulars of the preparation of the elixir, and how with prudence it may be concocted. At every degree of its preparation there are a number of essential external conditions to be fulfilled. These are all exigencies necessarily attributive to the elixir, though at first sight they may appear to common men as strange and peculiar. Also . . . .

Ham.—Master! As I have already begged you to understand, these before you are all Moslems, and, if it please you, you should give them some advantage over the accursed Jews——

Ibr.—(Rising slightly.) No! Not so! I have given my word, and for two million pieces I would not recall what I have spoken. But see! An idea comes to my mind. Only first tell me that I may rightly calculate. The elixir for this month's melting, when it is completed, how many pounds of brass will it suffice to convert into silver?

Ham.—(Fixing his eyes on the ceiling of the tent, presses the forefinger of his right hand on his chin, and thinks.) Elixir will be prepared sufficing for 800 pounds of silver. Thus, after its completion in thirty days, it will be projected over 800 pounds of brass and turn these into pure silver, such

as will pass the touchstone. Now, allowing that your worship deducts one-sixteenth of this by reason of the impurity of the brass, still at the beginning of next month 750 pounds of silver will be produced, as I deduce from my inspection of the amount of the crude brass and of the elixir.

Ibr.—And these worshipful gentlemen, how much copper money have they brought?

One of the Nak. peo.—Five thousand pounds-weight, master.

Ibr.—Very well! See, Mulla Hamid, what I have in my mind. The copper money of these worshipful people is but little in amount, and we will allow them 250 pounds of silver. Then there will remain 500 pounds, and that can be given to the Jews, that my promise to them may not be broken. What think you of it? Have I not made an excellent partition? On the one hand, your mediation regarding the rights of our co-religionists has not been for naught, and, on the other hand, my promise given has not been forfeited.

The Nak. peo.—(Bowing.) May Heaven increase your prosperity! So please you, we will deposit the money here in your presence.

Ibr.—(Raising his eyebrows and speaking slowly.) It is not necessary to deposit the money with me, and how should I find time enough and have leisure to attend to such trifles! Count it and give it over to Mulla Hamid, and then in thirty days come back here and get your 250 pounds of virgin silver. God be with you! The hour of mid-day prayer is come!

The Nak. peo.—(Bowing.) May Heaven increase your life and your prosperity. (Exeunt from the tent.)

ACT IV.

The scene is the same. The thirty days have elapsed. At early dawn the people of Nakhu are seen approaching. Mulla Ibrahim Khalil hastily ties a white cloth round his waist and turns up his sleeves. He is dressed in his working clothes, and his head is covered with a cotton night-cap. He comes outside and calls to his assistant.

Ibrahim.—Mulla Hamid, be quick, and go and get in the

tent the goldsmith forge, with the crucible and the small bellows, and bring them out here. Set them up here in this place, and see to arrange the nozzle of the bellows in its proper position. Then light the forge and set in the crucible. Bring the sack of coals from behind the tent and turn them out in front of the forge.

Now go to the tent, in the casket there are three small colored phials, and, twisted up, three colored papers; get them and bring them here.

Now untwist the yellow paper,—open it, and empty the contents of it into the crucible.

Now pour the liquid out of the green phial over it, and now sit down and blow the bellows.

(After these orders have been carried out, Mulla Ibrahim Khalil takes up a pair of iron tongs and fixes the crucible firmly. At this moment appear the heads of the Nakhu people from behind the corner of the tent, they having already dismounted from their horses. Ibrahim is occupied with his work, and he is looking into the crucible. They are delighted at discovering Ibrahim thus occupied.)

The Nakhu people.—Peace be on you!

Ibr.—(Looking up.) Peace be on you! Oh but why have you come to-day? How is this? and what have you done! What a disaster it is you bring down on my head! I was busy working for your good; but you are come to render abortive all the pains that I have taken for your sakes! Oh! Alas! Alas! Alas!

The Nak. peo.—(In astonishment.) But, master, what has happened? What disaster has come on our heads? What is it that we have done?

Ibr.—(In despair.) Why, what would you have worse than this? You set foot here in this place to-day at the very hour of the projection of the elixir! At the very moment when the ingredients are melting in the crucible! Why, it is the especial property of the elixir that for a whole league round the tent where it is liquidescing no strange man must set foot, or else the elixir loses its peculiar power and becomes a mere gas. On this subject the Magician of the Sprites, Sakkaki,

has most carefully insisted. Do you imagine that otherwise I should, of my own accord, have come and taken up my abode here in a corner by myself, thus far away from all habitations?

The Nak. peo.—(Astonished.) But, master, we have come in accordance with your own commands. To-day the thirty days are completed.

Ibr.—What I said to you was, "At the end of thirty days," meaning, of course, for you to let thirty days elapse, and to come on the thirty-first. The elixir would then have been prepared, and the silver already run out. But you come on the thirtieth day, at the very moment when the elixir is at fluxion in the crucible! Oh! Alas! Alas!

The Nak. peo.—Well, but as it is all happened, we don't know what to do. Can't we help it?

Ibr.—Why, there is no help for it. The elixir will not now do its office, and the silver will not be transmuted. Unless, indeed, you . . . . For the counter-spell is possible only with this.

The Nak. peo.—Unless we do what? What is it makes the counter-spell possible?

Ibr.—Well, now that you have once come, the alchemistic rule forbids that you should leave the place in which the elixir in the crucible is at fluxion. That is, if you would have any regard for your own welfare, and wish not to render abortive all the pains that I have undergone on your behalf. But from now until the time when the elixir is complete and pours out of the crucible—and I have already been occupied over it for the last hour, and it still requires two hours more to come to term—for this time you must not allow the idea of a monkey to cross your mind, nor must you let the semblance of its image come into your thoughts. The counter-spell depends on this! And otherwise this elixir, which for the whole of the last month I have been working to prepare, in the twinkling of an eye becomes naught, and goes off into thin air. This is its peculiar property, even as Hakim Juli has very carefully described, times over, and plainly laid down in his treatise.

The Nak. peo.—All right, master! This is a simple matter.

Please Heaven to make the perfecting of the elixir dependent on this alone!

Ibr.—Yes, it depends simply on this. May Allah be satisfied with what you do, and I shall be so likewise. Mulla Hamid, blow with the bellows.

(Hamid blows the bellows, while Ibrahim turns the crucible round with the iron tongs. He throws one of the ingredient powders into it, and pours in, drop by drop, the contents of one of the phials. Then he takes his seat, and, pulling out his watch, looks at it. All of a sudden——)

Zaman.—(Turning toward him.) Master, is there not some other counter-spell than this?

Ibr.—No other but what?

Zam.—No other but with the monkey.

Ibr.—You fool! What—what are you saying? What words are you pronouncing? Ah, woe to you!

Zam.—Well, but what can I do? I can't drive the monkey out of my thoughts.

Ibr.—(Very angrily.) Hold your tongue, you fellow! Whatever comes into your mind, keep it out!

Zam.—On my eyes be it, master.

Ibr.—(Angrily, to his assistant.) Blow hard with the bellows! You are going to sleep! (Poking down his head, he peers into the crucible. Then undoing the blue paper he pours in the powder.)

Salman.—(Throwing off his cap.) Ouf! how hot it is! Ouf! Heaven give you all its curse! They will not keep back! There is no help for it!

Ibr.—And whom should Heaven curse? Who will not keep back? What is there no help for? What are you talking about?

Salm.—There is no help for it! The counter-spell is impossible!

The rest of the Nakhu people.—That is true. There is no help for it. It will never be possible!

Ibr.—(Getting in a rage.) What do you mean by there

being no help for it? What is impossible? What are you talking about? What has come to you?

Salm.—Master, all the animals of the hills have changed themselves into the figures of monkeys and the likenesses of huge apes, and are uncurling their long tails before my eyes, and now are assaulting my head. Ouf! I don't know what to do, or whither to take refuge! Ouf! Heaven give you its malediction, you apes and monkeys!

The rest of the Nak. peo.—(Throwing up their heads.) Malediction on you, you monkeys! What a pass is this we have got into!

(While the people of Nakhu are not looking, Ibrahim hurriedly throws something into the crucible. Flames and a shower of bullets burst out of it and fly about on all sides. Then the crucible cracks, and the elixir blows up like gunpowder. The fire is upset, and various articles begin to blaze.—Hamid springs back behind the bellows in terror.)

Ibr.—(Screaming at the Nakhu people.) Heaven ruin your homes! What is this that you have done! Heaven ruin your homes, and close the doors of your houses on you! (He plucks his beard and strikes his knees.)

The Nak. peo.—Sit down, master! Be calm! What was decreed has come to pass. There is no help for it. But now what ought we to do?

Ibr.—(In great vexation.) What ought you to do? Why, what you must do is, now before the sun sets, to get yourselves to that village, near by there, and remain quiet for all the time that the next elixir is in preparation. You can come back here again after the thirty-one days have elapsed. You may then receive the silver that is yours in exchange for what still remains of the five thousand pounds-weight of your copper coin. That is, the remainder after deduction of the sum of necessity spent on the indispensable reagents used at the last fusion, and entirely wasted. But understand,—before getting notice from me, on no account do you stir out a step! For, may be, you will again make an error in your counting and arrive most inopportunely one day before the completion of the elixir, and so spoil the next as you have done this. An idea

comes to me. I will add the interest on your money, during this time, to the amount of the silver that shall be set aside for you. For it makes no difference to me to give you a little more or less silver, but for people like you every grain of silver is, after all, something. So God be with you! Go your ways and wait for my summons. (He retires to his tent, his head bent down, and says, aside:) Yes, wait till I send you a summons! But, please Heaven, before that time comes I shall find means of dispensing with seeing your faces again!

The Drama of Thibet is a religious spectacle show, occurring in the spring and fall, similar to our Easter festivities and the Mardi Gras. It is prepared by the monks of the convents, and performed by women of prominence and wealth, who are masked, costumed with richness and adorned with jewels.

THE DRAMA OF THIBET

After an original painting by L. Sabattier

Religious Drama

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Prologue

BETWEEN the ancient drama and the modern there is a great gulf, historical and moral. The Greek drama originated in the worship of Bacchus, and in its best estate was devoted to representing Pagan mythology. In its widest diffusion under the Roman Empire it exemplified Pagan morality. No wonder that the early Christian church in its onward march through the Gentile world anathematized stage-plays, and repelled actors from its privileges. Yet so superior

were the ancient dramas as literature that they were carefully preserved in monasteries and taught in schools. And so deeply-rooted in the human mind is the dramatic instinct, that there was always a strong popular desire for its gratification, and bands of players strolled from city to city.

Therefore, later the Church began to allow the drama—to sanction it within certain limits. The clergy sought to keep the control of acting in their own hands. They presented the historic facts of Christianity dramatically within the walls of the churches under the name of Mysteries. These were soon extended to include scenes of the history of the world as related in the Bible. After a time troupes of professional performers, still somewhat connected with the Church, carried these exhibitions to fairs in the open country. The trade-guilds also adopted them as part of their annual celebrations. Besides Mysteries, there were Miracle-plays founded chiefly on legends of the saints. Later came the Moralities, in which allegorical personages represented virtues and vices, and rules of conduct were enforced. On all these exhibi-

tions the stamp of the Church was impressed; but it grew fainter when laymen became professional players and held the mirror up to nature.

To this transition period and its quaint productions, not without real merit, the present volume is devoted. Although these religious plays belong generally to the Middle Ages, forming indeed a frail suspension-bridge across the gulf between the old and the new world of the drama, it is well known that remarkable survivals of them still remain. Of the famous Ober-Ammergau Passion-play, which every tenth year draws thousands of pilgrims to Bavaria, we give a full and impressive description. Spain also cherishes the religious play in her "Autos Sacramentales," to which Calderon, her loftiest dramatic genius, has contributed. As a specimen of his Scriptural work, "Belshazzar's Feast" is here presented.

Modern religious feeling has prevented the attempted revival of the Passion-play on the American stage; but it has approved the presentation of the sixteenth century morality, "Everyman," and this singularly impressive drama is offered to our readers.

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of the world, and the attitude taken by the Christian Church toward the stage was in general as unavoidable as its particular expressions were at times heated by fanaticism or distorted by ignorance. Had she not visited with her anathema a wilderness of decay, she could not herself have become—what she little dreamed of becoming—the nursing mother of the new birth of an art which seemed incapable of regeneration.

Players and Playgoers Excommunicated.

Rymer, the antiquary, relates that in the first ages of Christianity any one concerned with the theatre was not allowed baptism. Cyril declares that "when, in our baptism, we say, 'I renounce thee, Satan, and all thy works and pomps,' those pomps of the devil are stage plays and the like vanities." Tertullian affirms that they who in baptism renounce the devil and his pomps cannot go to a play without turning apostates. Thus the Greek and Latin fathers had an ample field for their eloquence and declamation before the Arians, the Gnostics and other intestine heresies sprang up to divert them. The entire spirit of the early Christian fathers was averse to dramatic composition and representation as savoring of worldliness; Cyprian, Basil and Clement of Alexandria are very warm upon the subject, and so is Chrysostom, who cries shame that people should listen to a comedian with the same ears that they hear an evangelical preacher. Augustine maintains that they who go to plays are as bad as those that write or act them. Tertullian, in his

warmth against tragedians, observes that the devil sets them on their high pantofles to give Christ the lie, who said, nobody can add one cubit to his stature. Rymer adds, in his *Short View of Tragedy,* that these denunciations from single authors had no great effect, for the tragedian still walked on in his high shoes. "Yet might they well expect a more terrible storm from the reverend fathers when they met in a body together, in council œcumenical. Then, indeed, began the ecclesiastical thunder to fly about, and presently the theatres, tragedy, comedy, bear-baiting, gladiators and heretics are given all to the devil without distinction. Nor was it sufficient for the zeal of those times to put down stage-plays. All heathen learning fell under the like censure and condemnation. One might as well have told them of the antipodes as persuaded the reading of Tully's Offices; they were afraid of the Greek philosophy like children of a bugbear, lest it fetch them away. A council of Carthage would not allow that a bishop should read any heathen book. How heartily St. Austin begs God's pardon for having read Virgil with delight in his graver years! What a plunge was St. Jerome put to by Rufinus laying to his charge the reading of heathen authors!"

Though, even in the fourth century, actors and mountebanks had been excluded from the benefit of Christian sacraments, and excommunication had been extended to those who visited theatres, instead of churches, on Sundays and holidays, yet the entertainments of the condemned profession had never been entirely suppressed and had even occasionally received

imperial patronage. Gradually, however, the mimes and their fellows became a wandering fraternity who appeared at festivals, when they were wanted, and vanished again into the deep obscurity which has ever covered that mysterious existence, a stroller's life. It was thus that these strange intermediaries of civilization carried down such traditions as survived of the acting drama of pagan antiquity into succeeding ages.

Monastic Writings.

While scattered bands of strolling players thus kept alive something of the looser, if not of the nobler, elements of their art, there were not wanting written compositions to bridge the gap between ancient and modern dramatic literature. Among others belonging to the latter part of the fourth century may be mentioned the *Passion of Christ*, commonly attributed to Gregory Nazianzen and written chiefly for educational purposes, on the model of Euripides, Menander or Terence. Probably with the same design were composed the so-called comedies of Hrotsvitha, the Benedictine nun of Gandersheim in Eastphalian Saxony, which are associated, in the history of Christian literature, with the spiritual revival of the tenth century in the days of Otto the Great. Though avowedly imitated from Terence, they were in the nature of religious exercises, taking for their themes the martyrdoms, miracles and miraculous conversions related in the legends of Christian saints. Thus, from about the ninth to the twelfth century, Germany and France became

acquainted with the religious or monastic drama, and this acquaintance extended to England after the Norman conquest. It was mainly performed by monks and nuns, and sometimes by children under their care, an exhibition of the latter kind being the *Play of St. Katharine*, acted at Dunstable about the year 1110. Nothing is known of it beyond the fact of its performance, and that similar plays had been acted before that date.

Mimes.

At a later time the productions of the cloister were mingled with more popular forms of the early Christian drama, chiefly through the employment of mimes, or *joculatores*, as now they began to be called. By them were kept alive, or revived, entertainments more dramatic than the purely religious plays. Moreover, there were, both among Celtic and Teutonic peoples, remnants of religious rites containing dramatic elements, and more was borrowed from heathen festivals of Roman or other origin. In different countries the mimes suited themselves to different tastes and to the different tendencies of native literature, as each one gradually emerged from the obscurity of the dark ages. The literature of the troubadours of Provence, which speedily found its way into Italy and Spain, came only into occasional contact with the beginnings of the monastic drama, as in *The Foolish Virgins*, a mystic play of the twelfth century. In northern France the joculatores, or jongleurs, as here they were termed, were identified with the trouvères, whose songs were

composed in commemoration of deeds of war. All these, together with the minstrels, attached in England as attendants to the households of the wealthy, were the successors of the mimes of Roman days. They were no longer regarded with the contempt of former times, often attaining wealth and distinction through civil and even military preferment. Thus, at the battle of Hastings, it was a mime, named Taillefer, who rode first into the fight, singing the songs of Roland and Charlemagne while he tossed his sword in the air and caught it again. In England, Norman minstrels quickly took the place of the less skillful gleemen of the Saxon period, while here, as elsewhere, the humbler members of the craft strolled from castle and convent to village green and village street, exhibiting as jugglers their pantomimic and other tricks.

Dramatic Elements in Church Service.

Thus, through the assistance of the very Church which had condemned them, the professional element of the stage survived, at least as tributary to the main stream of the religious drama, whose source was in the liturgy of the Church itself. Even the celebration of the mass contained a dramatic element, the reading of the Scripture forming the epic portion, and the anthems and responses the lyric feature of the service. As early at least as the fifth century, in order to increase the attractions of worship, living pictures, accompanied with songs, were used on special occasions to illustrate the Gospel narrative, and thus a certain amount of action

was gradually introduced into the service. Add to this the epic and lyric accompaniments, together with certain mimical adjuncts, and the "Liturgical Mystery," which was the earliest form of the Christian drama, was in existence. This had been accomplished not later than the tenth century, when it was the custom for priests to perform what were termed the offices of the shepherds, the innocents and the holy sepulchre, in connection with the Gospel of the day. In France, in the twelfth century, or, perhaps, in the eleventh, short Latin texts were written for these occasions, including passages from the legend of St. Nicholas, as well as from scriptural story, these texts being later composed in French, of which the earliest example is in the mystery of the Resurrection. In time, whole series of mysteries were joined together, finally resulting in what was known as the "collective mystery," merely a scholastic term, but one to which the principal examples of the mystery play correspond.

A Jewish play, of which fragments are still preserved in Greek iambics, is the first drama known to have been written on a Scripture subject. It is taken from the *Exodus*, and the principal characters are Moses, Zipphora, and God speaking from the burning bush. Moses delivers the prologue in a speech of sixty lines, and his rod is turned into a serpent on the stage. The author of the play is Ezekiel, a native of Alexandria, who is called the tragic poet of the Jews. Warton supposes that he wrote it to animate his dispersed brethren with the hopes of a future deliverance from their captivity under the leadership of a new Moses,

and that it was composed in imitation of the Greek drama at the close of the second century.

The productions of the Mediæval or Religious drama may be technically divided into three classes. The Mysteries proper deal with scriptural events only, their purpose being to set forth, with the aid of the prophetic or preparatory history of the Old Testament, and more especially of the fulfilling events of the New, the central mystery of the redemption of the world, as accomplished by the nativity, the passion and the resurrection of Christ. But in fact these were not kept distinctly apart from the Miracle plays, which are, strictly speaking, concerned with the legends of the saints of the Church. Of these species the Miracles must more especially have been fed from the resources of the monastic literary drama. Thirdly, the Moralities, or Moral plays, teach, or pretended to teach, and illustrate general truths allegorically, their characters being personified virtues or qualities. Of the Moralities the Norman trouvères had been the inventors, and, doubtless, hence the innovation to emancipate dramatic performances from the control of the Church.

Secular Elements.

The attitude of the clergy toward the dramatic performances which had arisen out of the elaboration of the services of the Church, but which soon admitted elements from other sources, was not, and could not be, uniform. As the plays grew longer, their paraphernalia more extensive and their spectators more numerous,

they began to be represented outside as well as inside the churches, and the use of the vernacular, in place of Latin, came to be gradually preferred. Miracles were less dependent on the connection with church services than Mysteries proper, and lay associations, guilds and schools in particular, soon began to act plays in honor of their patron saints in or near their own halls. Lastly, as scenes and characters of a more or less trivial description were admitted even into plays acted or superintended by the clergy, as some of these characters came to be expected by the audiences for conventional extravagance or fun, every new Herod seeking to out-Herod his predecessor, and the devils and their chiefs asserting themselves as indispensable favorites, the comic element in the religious drama increased, and that drama itself, even where it remained associated with the Church, grew less distinctly sacred. The endeavor to sanctify the popular tastes to religious uses, which connects itself with the institution of the great festival of Corpus Christi, when the symbol of the mystery of the incarnation was borne in solemn procession, led to the closer union of the dramatic exhibitions —hence often called processus—with this and other religious feasts; but it neither limited their range, nor controlled their development.

France.

At times favored, at times denounced, by the clergy, dramatic entertainments thus flourished for centuries, in some countries more, in others less, religious in

their character, and variously reinforced by the efforts of the craftsmen of the acting profession. In France, where they had always preserved a secular side, they soonest advanced into forms connecting themselves with later growths of the drama. At Paris the fraternity of the Bazoche—clerks of the Parliament and the chatelet—acquired, in 1303, the right of conducting the popular festivals, but after the Confrèrie de la Passion, who devoted themselves originally to the performances of Passion plays, had obtained a royal privilege for this purpose in 1402, the Bazoche gave itself up to the production of Moralities. A third association, calling itself the "Enfans sans souci"—the Devil-may-cares—had about the same time acquired the right of acting sotties—short comic plays with allegorical figures. Then the other companies interwove their Mysteries and Moralities with comic scenes from popular life, and gradually confined themselves to secular themes. Thus the transition to the regular drama here easily prepared itself; already in 1395 we find the Confrèrie performing a serious play on the story of Griseldis, and the sotties and farces, after mingling real types with allegorical personages, had come to exclude the latter. One of these, *Maistre Pierre Patelin*, acted in 1480 by the Bazoche, is, however slight in plot, in all esssentials a comedy.

Italy.

No Italian Mystery has been preserved from an earlier date than 1243, about which time associations were also formed in that country for the production of reli-

gious plays. These seem to have differed but little from those of northern Europe, except as to a less degree of coarseness in their comic characters. Plays on Old Testament subjects were called *Figure*, on New, *Vangeli;* in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries they were elaborated and produced with great care and bore various names, of which *Rappresentazioni* was the most common. The spectacular magnificence of theatrical displays accorded with that of the processions, both ecclesiastical and lay—the *Trionfi*, as they were called in the days of Dante—and the religious drama gradually acquired an academical character, assimilating it to the classical attempts which gave rise to the regular Italian drama. The poetry of the troubadours, which had come from Provence into Italy, here frequently took a dramatic form, and perhaps suggested his early experiments in this to Petrarch, the father of the Italian renaissance. After his death there are traces of similar literary efforts in the *volgare Provenzale* dialect. Meanwhile, remnants of the ancient popular entertainments had survived in the improvised farces acted at the courts, in the churches and among the people; the Roman carnival had preserved its wagon-plays, and numerous links remained to connect the popular modern comedy of the Italians with the Atellanes and Mimes of their ancestors.

Spain.

In Spain, where all traces of the ancient Roman theatre had disappeared after the Moorish conquest, the extant remains of the Religious drama date from a still

later period than the Italian—the thirteenth or fourteenth century. Its beginnings presented themselves in an advanced form, which aroused the opposition of the clergy, who sought to take the plays under their own control. In the secular literature of Spain nothing dramatic can be proved to have existed till the latter part of the fifteenth century. It had probably been customary from early times to insert in the Mysteries so-called *entremeses* or interludes; but it is not till 1472 that in the couplets of Mingo Revulgo and, about the same time, in another dialogue by the same author, we have attempts of a kind resembling the Italian *Conirasi*.

Germany.

In Germany, the history of whose drama so widely differs from that of the Spanish, Religious plays were performed probably as early as the twelfth century at the Christmas and Easter festivals. Other festivals were afterward celebrated in the same way, but up to the Reformation Easter enjoyed the preference. About the fourteenth century Miracle plays began to be frequently performed, and as these often treated subjects of historical interest, local or other, the transition to the barren beginnings of the German historical drama was afterward easy. Though these early German plays often have an element of the Moralities, they were not, as in France, blended with the drolleries of the professional strollers, which, carried on chiefly in carnival time, gave rise to the "Shrove Tuesday plays"—scenes from common life, largely interspersed with practical

fun. To these last a more enduring literary form was first given in the fifteenth century by Hans Rosenplut, the predecessor of Hans Sachs. By this time a connection was establishing itself in Germany between the dramatic amusements of the people and the literary labors of the mastersingers, but the Religious drama proper survived in Catholic Germany far beyond the times of the Reformation, and still survives at Ober-Ammergau, in the Bavarian Highlands, and at other places of less fame in the Tyrol.

England.

From the Religious drama, as developed in England, a fair idea may be derived of the general character of these mediæval productions. The Miracle plays, or Miracles, of which we hear in London in the twelfth century, were probably written in Latin and acted by ecclesiastics, but in the following century mention is made—in the way of prohibition—of plays acted by professional players. In England, as elsewhere, the clergy either sought to retain their control over the religious plays, which continued to be occasionally acted in churches even after the Reformation, or denounced them, with or without qualification. In Cornwall Miracles in the native Cymric dialect were performed at an early date, but those which have been preserved are apparently copies of English originals. Unlike the English plays, however, they were represented in the open country, in extensive amphitheatres constructed for the purpose.

The flourishing period of English Miracle plays begins with their performance by trading companies in various towns. Of this practice Chester is said to have set the example in the latter half of the thirteenth century; it was followed by Coventry, York and London, in which last city the performers were the parish clerks. Three collections, in addition to some single examples, of such plays, have come down to us—the Towneley plays, which were probably acted at the fairs of Woodkirk, near Wakefield, and those bearing the names of Chester and Coventry. Their dates are more or less uncertain; that of the Towneley plays may be earlier than the fourteenth century; the Chester may be ascribed to the close of the fourteenth or the earlier part of the fifteenth; the body of the Coventry probably belongs to the fifteenth or sixteenth. Many of the individual plays in these collections were doubtless founded on French originals; others are taken direct from Scripture, from the apocryphal Gospels or from the legends of the saints. Their characteristic feature is the combination of a series of plays into one collective whole, exhibiting the entire course of Bible history from the creation to the day of judgment.

"The manner of these plays," we read in a description of those at Chester, dating from the close of the sixteenth century, "was: Every company had its pageant, which pageants were a high scaffold with two rooms, a higher and a lower, upon four wheels. In the lower they appareled themselves, and in the higher room they played, being all open at the top, that all beholders might hear and see them. The places where they played

them were in every street. They begin first at the abbey gates, and when the first pageant was played, it was wheeled to the high cross before the mayor, and so to every street, and so every street had a pageant playing before them at one time till all the pageants appointed for the day were played; and when one pageant was near ended, word was brought from street to street, that so they might come in place thereof, exceedingly orderly, and all the streets have their pageants afore them all at one time playing together; to see which plays was great resort, and also scaffolds and stages made in the streets in those places where they determined to play their pageants."

Each play was performed by the representatives of a particular trade or company, after whom it was called the fishers', glovers', etc., pageant, while a prologue was spoken by a herald. As a rule the movable stage sufficed for the action, though we find horsemen riding up to the scaffold, and Herod instructed to "rage in the pagond and in the strete also." There is no probability that the stage was, as in France, divided into three platforms with a dark cavern at the side of the lowest, appropriated respectively to the Heavenly Father and his angels, to saints and glorified men, to mere men, and to souls in hell. Yet the last-named locality was frequently displayed in the English Miracles, with or without fire in its mouth. The costumes were in part conventional—divine and saintly personages being distinguished by gilt hair and beards, Herod clad as a Saracen, the demons wearing hideous heads, the souls black and white coats, according to their kind, and the angels gold wings.

Doubtless, these performances abounded in what seem to us ludicrous features, and though their main purpose was serious, they were not, in England at least, intended to be devoid of fun. But many of these features are, in truth, only homely and naïve, and the simplicity of feeling they exhibit is at times not without its pathos. The occasional excessive grossness is due to an absence of refinement in taste rather than to an obliquity of moral sentiment. The Coventry plays, which were possibly written by clerical hands, show an advance upon the others. In the same plays may be observed an element of abstract figures, which connects them with a different species of the Mediæval drama.

Morality Plays.

The Moralities correspond to the love for moral allegory which manifests itself in many periods of literature, and nowhere more so than in England. Hence the popularity of the Moral-play, which indeed never equaled that of the Miracles, but sufficed to keep alive the former species until it received a fresh impulse from the connection established between it and the "new learning of the Reformation, together with its new political and religious questions. Moreover, a specially popular element was supplied to these plays which, in manner of representation, differed in no essential point from the Miracles. This was in a character borrowed from the latter and, in the Moralities, usually provided with a companion, whose task it was to lighten the weight of such abstractions as Sapience and Justice.

These were the devil and his attendant, the Vice, of whom the latter seems to have been of native origin, and, as he was usually dressed in a fool's habit, was probably suggested by the familiar custom of keeping an attendant fool at court or in great houses. The Vice had many aliases, as Sin, Fraud, Iniquity, but his usual duty was to torment and tease the devil, his master, for the edification and diversion of the audience. He was gradually blended with the domestic fool, who survived in the regular drama.

The earlier English Moralities—from the reign of Henry VI to that of Henry VII—usually allegorize the conflict between good and evil in the mind and life of man, without any side intention of theological controversy; such also is still essentially the purpose of the Morality-play we possess by Henry VIII's poet, the witty Skelton, and even another, perhaps the most perfect example of its class, which, in date, is later than the Reformation. But if such theology as *Every Man* teaches is the orthodox doctrine of Rome, its successor, Wever's *Lusty Juventas,* breathes the spirit of the Reformation. In the early part of Elizabeth's reign the Morality-plays are largely occupied with religious controversy, in some instances with an admixture of political topics.

Interludes.

The transition from the Morality to the regular drama was effected, on the one hand, by the intermixture of historical personages, as in Bishop Bale's *King Johan,* on the other by the introduction of types of real life,

side by side with abstract figures. A further step was taken in presenting short farces, in the form of interludes, after the fashion of the French, and dealing entirely with real men and women. The best of them were by John Heywood, but other able writers took the same direction, and thus the allegory of abstractions was undermined on the stage, just as in didactic literature the ground was cut from under its feet by the *Ship of Fooles*. But while facilitating the advent of comedy, the interludes by no means superseded the Religious drama, for both Miracle and Morality-plays survived into the Elizabethan age, even after the regular drama had made good its foothold on the stage.

Such, in brief, as gathered from the leading authorities, is an outline of the dramatic annals of the middle ages—from the fourth to the fifteenth or sixteenth century. Between the close of the classic drama and the renewal of its examples which attended the revival of classical learning, the stage produced little that will endure, except as curiosities of literature. Nor can it be said that the influence of the Religious drama was altogether beneficial. It is a question whether Miracle or Passion-plays fostered religious sentiment; whether Morality-plays improved the morals of the community, while all of them tended to bring religion into contempt, to cheapen its mysteries and to throw discredit on doctrines held in reverence by the Christian world. At best the effect was purely emotional and had nothing to do with the calm exercises of which true worship consists. It may have been the worship of the senses, but it was not the worship of the soul.

II.

The Religious Drama in Europe.

It was chiefly by the fathers of the Church, as we have seen, that the drama was saved from extinction, and had its influence been entirely for good, we should have regarded them with unmixed feelings of gratitude, for the preservation of this, as of other branches of art. Such, indeed, is the sentiment commonly entertained for some of the earlier fathers, for men like Apollinarius and Gregory Nazianzen, the latter for the first time introducing the Virgin on the stage in his only extant play. At Constantinople, where he ruled as bishop, his works were substituted for those of Sophocles and Euripides, with the choruses changed into Christian hymns, and it is said that his audiences found in them as much to admire as in those of the classic poets.

Influence of the Church.

At a later period, in order to wean the people from the ancient spectacles, particularly the Bacchanalian and other annual festivities, religious shows were instituted partaking of the same spirit of licentiousness.

About the year 990 Theophylact, patriarch of Constantinople, caused the *Feast of Fools* and the *Feast of the Ass,* with other religious farces of that sort, to be exhibited in the Greek church.

The Feast of Fools.

Beletus, who lived in 1182, mentions the *Feast of Fools,* as celebrated in some places on New Year's day, in others on Twelfth day, and in others the week following. In France, at different cathedral churches, there was a bishop or an archbishop of fools elected; and even a pope of fools. These mock pontiffs had usually their suite of ecclesiastics, and one of their ridiculous ceremonies was to shave the precentor of fools upon a stage erected before the church in the presence of the populace, who were amused during the operation by his lewd and vulgar discourses, accompanied by actions equally reprehensible. They were mostly attired in the ridiculous dresses of pantomime players and buffoons, and so habited entered the church and performed the service accompanied by crowds of the laity in masks, representing monsters, or with their faces smutted to excite fear or laughter, as occasion might require.

Some of them personated females and practised wanton devices. Some interrupted or burlesqued divine service, and ran leaping all over the church. The bishop or pope of fools performed the service habited in pontifical garments, and gave his benediction; when it was concluded he was seated in an open car-

riage and drawn about to different parts of the town, followed by a large train of clergy and laymen and a cart filled with filth, which was thrown upon the populace assembled to see the procession. These licentious festivities were called the December liberties. They were always held at Christmas time, or near to it, but not confined to one particular day, and seem to have lasted through part of January.

The Feast of the Ass.

The *Feast of the Ass*, as it was anciently celebrated in France, consisted almost entirely of dramatic show. It was instituted in honor of Balaam's ass, and at one of the performances the clergy walked on Christmas day in procession, habited to represent prophets and others. Moses appeared in an alb and cope, with a long beard and rod. David had a green vestment. Balaam, with an immense pair of spurs, rode on a wooden ass, which inclosed a speaker. There were also six Jews and six Gentiles. Among other characters the poet Virgil was introduced singing monkish rhymes as a Gentile prophet and a translator of the Sybilline oracles. Thus they moved in procession through the body of the church, chanting versicles and conversing in character on the nativity and kingdom of Christ, till they came into the choir. The same ceremony, as it was performed at the same season, in the cathedral church of Rouen, commenced with a procession in which the clergy represented the prophets of the Old Testament who foretold the birth of Christ, then followed Balaam mounted on

his ass, Zachariah, Elizabeth, John the Baptist, the sybil Erythree, Simeon, Virgil, Nebuchadnezzar, and the three children in the Chaldean furnace. After the procession entered the cathedral, several groups of persons performed the part of Jews and Gentiles, to whom the choristers addressed speeches; afterward they called on the prophets one by one, who came forward successively and delivered a passage relative to the Messiah. The other characters advanced to occupy their proper situations, and reply in certain verses to the demands of the choristers. They performed the miracle of the Babylonian furnace; Nebuchadnezzar spoke, the sybil appeared at the last, and then an anthem was sung, which concluded the ceremony.

Another *Feast of the Ass,* anciently celebrated at Beauvais yearly on the 14th of January, commemorated the flight of the Virgin into Egypt with the Infant Jesus. To represent the Virgin, the most beautiful girl in the city, with a pretty child in her arms, was placed on an ass richly caparisoned. Thus mounted she preceded the bishop and his clergy, and they all went in grand procession from the cathedral to the parish church of St. Stephen, On entering the chancel, they arranged themselves on the right side of the altar; the mass immediately commenced, and the Introit, Gloria Patri, the Creed, and other parts of the service were terminated by the burden of Hin-Han, Hin-Han, in imitation of the braying of an ass. The officiating priest, instead of saying *Ita Missa est* at the end of the mass, concluded by singing three times Hin-Han, Hin-Han, Hin-Han, and during the performance hymns

were sung in praise of the ass. The singing concluded, the animal, covered with precious ornaments, was then solemnly conducted to the middle of the choir.

Other Mediæval Feasts.

In a paper read before the English Society of Antiquaries, in 1804, Francis Douce, one of the fellows, made the following statement concerning these ceremonies: "The Feast of Calends, which arose out of the Roman Saturnalia, resembled, in a great degree, the excesses of a modern carnival, and the archbishops and bishops degraded themselves by joining in these sports with the inferior clergy." An illumination in the celebrated Bedford Missal, representing several men feasting in a church-yard, is noticed by Douce as referring to an ancient festival on the 21st of February, called the *Feralia*, or *Feast of the Dead*, instituted by Numa in honor of the manes, and sometimes called *Parentalia*. This authority supposes that many of the grotesque figures in the illuminated religious manuscripts, generally, but erroneously called missals, are allusive to these subjects. *The Feast of Fools*, he says, soon made its way into England, but its vestiges here are by no means so numerous as in France. The earliest mention of it is in the reign of Henry IV, and it was probably abolished about the end of the fourteenth century. Numerous imitations of it arose in various places and on different occasions. In order to wean the people from the ancient spectacles and Bacchanalian festivals, religious shows were instituted by no means free from licentiousness, Theo-

phylact, patriarch of Constantinople, about the year 990, causing the *Feast of Fools* and the *Feast of the Ass* to be exhibited in the Greek church.

The Boy Bishop.

The Boy Bishop was another pastime of the Church. In Franconia, the scholars on St. Nicholas day used to elect one of their number to play the Boy Bishop, and two others for his deacons. He was escorted to church, with his mitre on, by the other boys in solemn procession, where he presided at the worship, and afterward he and his deacons went singing from door to door and collecting money; not begging alms, but demanding it as his subsidy. This was a very ancient practice, for as early as 1274 the council of Strasburg prohibited the choosing of the Boy Bishop; though so late as the seventeenth century, it was customary at schools dedicated to Pope Gregory the Great, who was also patron of scholars, for one of the boys to be the representative of Gregory on the occasion, and act as bishop, with certain companions as his clergy.

Mystery Plays.

As Mysteries were first written by Gregory Nazianzen, it is not likely that his example as a father of the Church should be wholly lost sight of as soon as he succeeded in destroying the performance of the ancient Greek plays; yet there are no traces of sacred representations in a dramatic form until many centuries

after Gregory Nazianzen's death. In his researches into the history of music, Dr. Burney ascertained that the first dramatic representation in Italy was a spiritual comedy, performed at Padua in 1243. In 1554 were printed at Rome the statutes of a company instituted in that city in 1264, whose chief employment was to represent the sufferings of Christ in passion week. In 1298 the *Passion* was played at Friuli, and the same year the clergy of Civita Vecchia, on the feast of Pentecost and the two following holidays, performed the play of *Christ*, that is of His passion, resurrection, ascension, judgment, and the mission of the Holy Ghost, and again in 1304 they acted the creation of Adam and Eve, the annunciation of the Virgin Mary, the birth of Christ, and other subjects of sacred history.

Sir John Hawkins, in his *History of Music*, has given an account of a spectacle, invented and exhibited at Florence in the year 1310 by Pietro Cosimo, the painter, which Hawkins terms the most whimsical and at the same time the most terrifying that imagination can conceive. "Having taken a resolution to exhibit this extraordinary spectacle at the approaching carnival, Cosimo shut himself up in a great hall, and there disposed everything so secretly for the execution of his design that no one had the least suspicion of what it was about. In the evening of a certain day in the carnival season there appeared in one of the chief streets of the city a chariot painted black, with white crosses and dead men's bones, drawn by six buffaloes, and upon the end of the pole stood the figure of an angel with the attributes of Death and holding a long trumpet in his hands,

which he sounded in a shrill and mournful tone, as if to awaken and raise the dead. Upon the top of the chariot sat a figure with a scythe in his hand, representing Death, having under his feet many graves, from which appeared, half way out, the bare bones of carcasses. A great number of attendants, clothed in black and white, masked with Death's heads, marched before and behind the chariot, bearing torches, which enlightened it at distances so well chosen that everything seemed natural. There were heard, as they marched, muffled trumpets, whose hoarse and doleful sounds served as a signal for the procession to stop. Then the sepulchres were seen to open, out of which proceeded, as if by resurrection, bodies resembling skeletons, who sung in a sad and melancholy tone Italian airs suitable to the subject. While the procession stopped in the public place the musicians sung with a continued and tremulous voice the psalm *Miserere*, accompanied with instruments covered with crape, to render their sounds more dismal. The chariot was followed by many persons habited like corpses, and mounted on the leanest horses that could be found, spread with black housings, having white crosses with death's heads painted at the four corners. Each of the riders had four persons to attend, habited in shrouds like the dead, each with a torch in one hand and a standard of black taffeta, painted with white crosses, bones and death's heads in the other. In short, all that horror can imagine most affecting at the resurrection of the dead was represented at this masquerade, which was intended to represent the *Triumph of Death*."

A spectacle so sad and mournful struck dismay through Florence; and, although in a time of festivity, made penitents of some, while others admiring the ingenious manner in which everything was conducted, praised the whim of the inventor and the execution of a concert so suitable to the occasion. Appalling as this exhibition undoubtedly was, yet its terrors must have been exceeded by one in the same city, from which Hawkins supposes that Cosimo's was taken. This was the performance of the *Torments of the Damned*, at the festival of the first of May, 1304, when, according to Sismondi, the bed of the river Arno was transformed into a representation of the gulf of hell, and every variety of suffering that the imagination of monks or of the poets had invented was inflicted, by streams of boiling pitch, flames, ice and serpents, on real persons, whose cries and groans rendered the horrors of the scene complete.

Religious Plays in Italy.

As in other European countries, the origin of the Italian drama was essentially religious. Christianity found the need of replacing the heathen shows and spectacles it had suppressed, and amused the people with representations of Scriptural subjects, or of incidents in the lives of the saints. For centuries these were not written down, but improvised or exhibited in dumb show. Gradually the Miracle-play came into being, a more advanced development, the text of which must be learned by rote, with much drilling of the performers, and therefore the lines were committed to writing. In

Italy this assumed a more polished form than elsewhere, especially in the *Rappresentazione Sacra*, rude in construction, but composed frequently in elegant octave verse. This was in the fifteenth century, the earliest play of which the date is known being the *Abraham and Isaac* of Feo Belcari, in 1449. It became exceedingly popular in the latter part of the century, especially at Florence, Lorenzo de Medici being reputed as one of its authors. Numbers of such pieces were printed, down even to the end of the seventeenth century, and usually adorned with wood engravings. The materials were almost entirely drawn from ecclesiastical legend. Constantine is represented as giving his daughter to his successful general, Gallicanus, on condition of his becoming a Christian. Julian, marching to wage war with the Persians, is slain by an invisible saint. The histories of Tobit, of St. Agnes, of St. Cecilia and numbers of similar stories form the staple subjects. Sometimes romance is laid under contribution, as in the instance of the Emperor Octavian, but always with a religious motive. Dramatic force does not seem to have been much considered, the stately octave being better adapted for declamation than for dialogue; but the stage directions are very precise, and every effort seems to have been made to impress the spectators, so far as permitted by the rudeness of the open-air theatre, usually a mere scaffold with, perhaps, a curtain for the back-ground, yet often very splendidly decorated. If we can believe Menestrier, however, as quoted in Bayle's *Dictionary of Art,* Italy had more pretentious theatres, at one of which, at Veletri, as he says, Mystery plays were acted

even in the nineteenth century. They were, indeed, in the dark ages, the principal entertainments at the reception of princes.

Mysteries at Paris.

In 1313, Philip the Fair gave the most sumptuous entertainment at Paris ever remembered in that city. Edward II and his queen, Isabella, crossed over from England with a large retinue of nobility, and partook of the magnificent festivities. The pomp and profusion of the banquetings, the variety of the amusements, and the splendor of the costumes were unsurpassed. On each of the eight days the princes and nobles changed their dresses three times, while the people were sometimes entertained with representations of the *Glory of the Blessed*, at other times with the *Torments of the Damned*, and with various other spectacles, especially the *Procession of Reynard the Fox*. In 1402, by an edict of Charles VI, the Mystery of the conception, passion and resurrection of Christ was performed at St. Maur, about five miles from Paris. At the council of Constance, in the year 1417, the English fathers gave a Mystery of the Massacre of the Holy Innocents. In this play a low buffoon was introduced, desiring of his lord to be dubbed a knight, that he might be properly qualified to go on the adventure of killing the mother of the children of Bethlehem, which was treated with the most ridiculous levity. The good women of Bethlehem attacked the knight-errant with their spinning-wheels, broke his head with their distaffs, abused him as a coward and a disgrace to chivalry, and sent him

home to Herod as a recreant champion, with much ignominy.

At the entrance of the kings of France and England into Paris, on the 1st of December, 1420, the *Mystery of the Passion of Our Lord* was performed on a raised scaffolding one hundred paces in length. Within the next few years there were other notable performances at Paris, especially the one which commemorated the entrance of Henry VI of England as king of France. In 1486 the Mysteries of the nativity, passion and resurrection were performed with great magnificence at Poictiers.

In the royal library at Paris is a fine copy in vellum, with every page illuminated, of the *Mystery of the Passion of Jesus Christ.* It contains a manuscript note in French, from which it appears to have been handsomely represented on the 3d of July, 1437, in the presence of many lords and ladies whose names are given. In the park, amid the plain of Veximiel, were arranged nine rows of seats, one above another, and these were all filled with titled personages. "To represent Christ was the curate of St. Victor of Metz; he was nigh dead upon the cross if he had not been assisted; but on the following day he counterfeited the resurrection, and performed his part very well. Another priest, who was chaplain of Metrange, played Judas, and was nearly dead while hanging; for his heart failed him, wherefore he was quickly unhung and carried off. Also the mouth of hell was very well done; for it opened and shut when the devils required to enter and come out, and had two large eyes of steel."

The story of the *Mystery of the Knight who gives his Wife to the Devil*, played in 1505, is of a dissipated knight reduced by his profligacy to distress and wickedness. In his misfortunes the devil appears and proposes to make him richer than ever if he will assign his wife, that the devil may have her in seven years. After some discussion the knight consents, his promise is written out, and he signs it with his blood. The seducer then stipulates that his victim shall deny his God; the knight stoutly resists for a time, but in the end the devil gains his point, and, emboldened by success, ventures to propose that the knight shall deny the Virgin Mary. This, however, being a still greater sin, he refuses to commit it with the utmost vehemence and persistence, and the devil walks off baffled. At the end of seven years, the promise being due, the devil presents it to the knight, who, considering it a debt of honor, prepares to discharge it immediately. He orders his wife to follow him to a certain spot, but on their way she sees a church, which, after obtaining her husband's permission, she enters, for the purpose of offering her devotion. While thus engaged, the Virgin Mary, recollecting the knight's unsullied allegiance to her, assumes the semblance of his wife, and in that character joins him. The moment that they both appear before the devil he perceives whom he has to deal with, and upbraids the unconscious knight for attempting to deceive him. The knight protests his ignorance and astonishment, which the Virgin corroborates by telling the devil that it was her own plan for the rescue of two souls from his power, and she orders him to give up the knight's promise. He, of

course, obeys so high an authority, and runs off in great terror. The Virgin exhorts the knight to better conduct in future, restores his wife to him, and the piece concludes.

The Acts of the Apostles.

In the reign of Francis I (1541) the performance of the *Acts of the Apostles* was proclaimed with great solemnity, and acted at Paris for many successive days before the nobility, clergy and a large assemblage in the Hotel de Flanders. The dramatis personæ were God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the Virgin and Joseph, archangels, angels, the apostles and disciples, Jewish priests, emperors, philosophers, magicians, Lucifer, Satan, Beelzebub, Belial the attorney-general of hell, Cerberus the porter, and a multitude of other celestial, terrestial and infernal personages, amounting altogether to 485 characters. Though the scenes of these plays were chiefly scriptural, yet many were from apocryphal New Testament subjects, and the whole exhibition was a strange mixture of sacred and profane history. A scene in which the Spirit of God descends in a cloud upon the apostles as tongues of fire directs that "here a noise should be made to imitate thunder resounding through Paradise." In the play of *Pentecost*, Mary being in company with the eleven apostles and the disciples, altogether 111 persons, the deficiency in the number of the apostles through the treachery of Judas is supplied by Peter holding two straws, unequally cut, between his finger and thumb, from which one being drawn, the lot fell to Mathias. Scenes, of

which long extracts are given in Bayle's *Dictionary of Art,* convey some idea of similar absurdities.

Assumption of the Virgin.

Other instances might be given of the religious drama of this period, not only in France, but in Italy, Spain, Germany and England. These plays are enlivened by boldness of incident, and not infrequently by scenes and passages of remarkable tenderness and delicacy. In the *Assumption of the Virgin,* for instance, Mary, after being addressed by one of the celestial messengers sent to convey her to heaven, requests that before they take her soul, her body may be laid asleep; she gently reclines herself and dies, and virgins enter, and wrapping the body in a sheet, carry her away. Gabriel receives her soul, and while he holds it, gives directions for the funeral. At his desire an anthem of joy is sung for the blessed Assumption, and a female then comes in and says, they have stripped the body to wash it, as in charity bound to do, but such is the splendor thereof, and the brilliancy issuing from her limbs, that it is not possible for human eyes to sustain it. Here they all ascend into Paradise and carry the soul of the Virgin with them.

Creation of the World.

The following is a description, by an English army captain, of the *Creation of the World,* as performed at Lisbon, early in the nineteenth century: "On our entrance we found the theatre nearly filled with well-

dressed people, the front row of boxes full of ladies most superbly and tastefully dressed, their hair in braids and ornamented with a profusion of diamonds and artificial flowers, without caps, and upon the whole making a very brilliant appearance. The band is a good one, and the theatre is worth attending, were it on no other account than to hear it. When the curtain drew up, we saw the Eternal Father descend in a cloud with a long white beard, with a great number of lights and angels around him; he then gave orders for the creation of the world; over his head was drawn an equilateral triangle, as an emblem of the Trinity. The next scene presented the serpent tempting Eve to eat the apple, and his infernal majesty, the prince of darkness, paid the most exaggerated encomiums to her beauty, in order to engage her to eat, which as soon as she had done, and persuaded Adam to do the same, there came a most terrible storm of thunder and lightning, with a dance of infernal spirits, with the devil in the midst, dressed in black, with scarlet stockings and a gold-laced hat on his head. While the dance was performing, a voice from behind the scenes pronounced in a hoarse and solemn manner the word 'Jesus,' on which the devils immediately vanished in a cloud of smoke. After this, the Eternal Father descended in great wrath without any attendant, and called for Noah, whom we were much surprised to see thus early in the world's history. When he appeared, the Eternal Father told him he was sorry he had created such a set of ungrateful scoundrels, and that for their wickedness he intended to drown them altogether. Here Noah interceded for them, and at last

it was agreed that he should build an ark, and he was ordered to go to the king's dock-yard in Lisbon, and there he would see John Gonzalvez, the master builder, for he preferred him to either the French or English builders. The Eternal Father then reäscended into heaven, and Noah began to build his ark."

Pictorial Mysteries.

Early in the nineteenth century an improvement was made on the old-time Mystery-plays through the representation of the principal events in the life of Christ from the paintings of the great masters. Such representations, for instance, were given at Strasburg, beginning with 1816. Not a word was spoken, and there was very little gesture or other motion; but sacred tunes were played by a harmonica, concealed from view, with occasional hymns or odes, sung in parts by female voices. These, however, were merely accessory to the pictorial display, which included Guido's *Annunciation*, Domenichino's *Adoration of the Shepherds*, Rembrandt's *Offerings of the Wise Men*, Da Vinci's *Raising of the Widow's Son*, Titian's *Disciples at Emmaus*, Guido's *Last Supper*, the *Washing of the Disciples' Feet*, by Rubens, and the *Descent from the Cross*, by Raphael. The scenes were impressive, admirably copied and certainly more conducive to spiritual-mindedness than the antics and buffooneries too often witnessed on the stage. Certain it is that by viewing a copy of Michael Angelo's *Last Judgment*, or one of Raphael's *Madonnas*, the spectator would be more inclined to

religious contemplation than by anything he might see in the Religious drama.

Origin of Oratorio.

As the Mystery-play was the foundation of modern tragedy, so, in Italy, it gave rise to the oratorio. In 1540 was founded at Rome, by St. Philip Neri, a brotherhood named the Priests of the Oratory, who, in order to increase their congregations, sang psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, either as solos or cantatas, reserving a portion of the performance until after the sermon, as an inducement to remain and hear it. Incidents from Scripture, such as the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son, written in dialogue or verse, were also set to music, and by the excellence of the composition and representation quickly won repute. To this species of drama was given the name of oratorio.

At Berlin, in 1804-05, at Vienna, in 1810, and again in 1815, while the Peace Congress was in session after the downfall of Napoleon, the comedy of *David* was performed in five acts, with choruses and battle scenes. The back of the stage extended into the street, from which were admitted horses and vehicles, so that several hundred soldiers of all arms, habited as Jews and Philistines, performed their evolutions and discharged their weapons in imitation of the battles described in the *Book of Kings*. The performance was given at the principal theatre in the Austrian capital, and, apart from its anachronisms, appears to have been very impressive, for it was attended by the tzar, the king of Prussia and

other monarchs, with the representatives of many European courts.

Turning again to the origin of oratorio, we may quote Doctor Burney as our authority for the statement that its inception is found in the Mystery and Morality plays. After the founding at Rome of the order known as the Fathers of the Oratory, the rules of the brotherhood became exceedingly strict. In the *Institutions of the Oratory*, printed at Oxford in 1687, we find that corporal punishment, or scourging, was intermingled somewhat whimsically with the musical performances. "From the first of November to the feast of the Resurrection, their contemplation of celestial things shall be heightened by a concert of music; and it is also enjoined that, at certain seasons of frequent occurrence, they all whip themselves in the oratory. And the custom is, that after half an hour's mental prayer, the officers distribute whips made of small cords full of knots, put forth the children, if there be any, and carefully shutting the doors and windows, extinguish the other lights, except only a small candle so placed in a dark lanthorn upon the altar that the crucifix may appear clear and visible, but not reflecting any light, thus making all the room dark: then the priest in a loud and doleful voice, pronounceth the verse Jube Domine benedicere—Command thy blessing, O Lord—and going through an appointed service, comes to Apprehendite disciplinam—Take your discipline, etc.—at which words, taking their whips, they scourge their naked bodies during the recital of the 50th Psalm, *Miserere*, and the 129th, De profundis, with several prayers, at the conclusion of

which, upon a given sign, they end their whipping, and put on their clothes in the dark and in silence."

For a more detailed account of the Religious drama we will now turn to England, where we find it in all its branches and in its highest development. While many of the plays are merely translations or adaptations from the French, Italian or German, new and original features were added, and nowhere did the Mysteries and Miracles of the middle ages take a stronger hold on the people.

III.

English Mystery and Miracle Plays.

We have no record of any religious drama in England in the Anglo-Saxon age. The germs for Church Mysteries, present in the liturgy, could scarcely have found a suitable soil for their development. The serious and subjective nature of the people was not favorable to the introduction of theatrical representations.

After the Norman conquest it was different. Indeed, the second half of the eleventh century and the whole of the twelfth formed, for the spiritual drama in France, the most decisive and fruitful epoch; and the Normans in England played the most important part in its progress. The two oldest French Mysteries extant—*Adam*, and a later play on the *Resurrection*—appear to have been both written by Normans and in England; and we may well assume that the English population heard the Mystery, in its popular phraseology, almost at the same time as they heard it in its strictly liturgical forms, or perhaps even sooner.

The first dramatic representation in England of which we have any record, took place in a school. At the beginning of the twelfth century a school at Dun-

stable, in connection with the abbey of St. Albans, was presided over by a Norman clerk named Geffrei, who was expressly brought over from the continent to take charge of it. Geffrei wrote at Dunstable the play of *St. Katherine,* which was acted by his pupils. For their costumes he asked and received the choir clothes from the sacristy of St. Albans; but a fire breaking out the night after the representation, Geffrei's dwelling was burnt, with the borrowed costumes and probably the manuscript of the play, of which nothing more is known. The author saw in this the hand of God, took holy orders, and when the abbot of St. Albans died, was made his successor.

In the second half of the twelfth century Miracle plays began to be acted in England even publicly before the whole people. A passage in the *Life of the Holy Archbishop and Martyr, Thomas,* by William Fitzstephen, shows that such representations were common in London between 1170 and 1180. In a description of the English capital, the biographer remarks: "Instead of theatrical exhibitions, instead of scenic plays, London has plays of a holier kind, representations of the miracles which the holy confessors worked, or of the sufferings in which the constancy of the martyrs was gloriously confirmed." It is hardly to be doubted that these representations took place in the Anglo-Norman tongue.

Development of the Religious Drama.

In those early times, therefore, the English people —at least those outside the church walls—were made

especially familiar with that species of the Religious drama, whose fables belonged to the cycle of the legends and pious tales, and therefore to a field which Norman epic poets largely cultivated. Works like *Adam* cannot have been represented very frequently in the twelfth century; and still less frequently, if at all, were popular dramas acted in which the Saviour himself appeared and spoke, and the story of the Passion was certainly not yet represented in real dramatic form. In a nation where the religious play was something new, and where the religious sentiment was deeply ingrained, if actors had proceeded too freely they would probably have been accused of profanation. But the English people became gradually accustomed to the spiritual drama and learned to enjoy it. Legendary subjects prepared the way for Biblical; scenes from the Old Testament for similar ones from the New; and so, finally, the most sacred portions of the story of salvation came to be represented openly; and these latter portions must have indeed aroused the keenest interest of the pious spectators.

Nothing so much interests the ordinary mind as to see what is already known brought forward in new form, or to see that which is regarded with holy awe brought into touch with ourselves. The same religious sentiment which had held the English people at first aloof from the Biblical drama, afterward made this subject the most beloved of all, and cast the dramatized legends into the shade. Thus, in the course of time, the Religious drama in England changed its contents, but still retained the name which it bore at its first pub-

lic appearance. In mediæval England the popular Religious drama is called "Miracle" without any regard to its contents. Among those Miracle plays which, according to contemporary evidence, were acted in the second half of the thirteenth century in churchyards, on village greens, and in the streets of the towns, we have probably productions of the Biblical as well as of the legendary sort.

The advance of the Religious drama in England is connected with the advancing importance of fairs, with the growth of the national wealth, the spread of trade and industry, the elevation of the burgesses, and the prosperity of the guilds. All these conditions conduced at the same time to the emancipation of the drama from the church and the clergy. The clergy as a whole, indeed, were very far from giving up their activity in things theatrical. In the second half of the thirteenth century, and even in the fourteenth, many clerics appeared masked and painted in the public Miracle plays —to the great scandal of pious souls who remembered the canonical decrees sternly forbidding such things. Neither the censure of serious judges of morality, nor the renewing and sharpening of the church statutes by popes and synods, was able completely to suppress this disorder. The greater the influence gained by acting the Biblical dramas among the masses, the less the clergy were inclined to let the means of gaining such influence be wrested entirely out of their hands by the laity. Pecuniary interests were also at stake. In the year 1378 the choir singers of St. Paul's petitioned Richard II to prevent certain uneducated and unexperi-

enced persons from carrying out their intended representation of the history of the Old Testament; they thus made paramount the interests of the cathedral clergy, who had spent large sums in preparing a public representation of the same subject for the following Christmas. Mendicant friars, Franciscans, Carmelites, also turned their attention to the popular stage. It is probable that in many places a clergyman acted as superintendent over the religious plays; and at least one side of the dramatic art must have remained, through the entire middle ages, the special province of the clergy, that is, the composition of the drama. The honest artisan or shopkeeper, who could scarcely learn his allotted part, was certainly unable to compose the text of a spiritual play.

The Chester Mysteries.

Among the oldest specimens of the Religious drama in England are the Chester Mysteries, ascribed in part to a Benedictine monk of that city, with a promise of a thousand days of pardon from the pope to all who attended the representation. These were first acted, so far as is known, in 1328, or rather they were then first produced in English. For the entertainment of the populace, various additions were made to the Biblical story. Hence arose many absurdities, as in the play of the *Flood*, which represents Noah's wife as positively refusing to enter the ark:

Noe.—Good wife, doe now, as I thee bidd.

Noe's Wife.—By Christ not I, ere I see more need.
Though thou stande all day and stare.

Noe.—Lorde! that Woman ben crabed be,
And not are meeke, I dare well saye;
That is well seene by me, to-day,
I witness of ye eich one:
Good wife, let all this be beare,
That thou makest in this place here,
For all they wene thou art master,
And soe thou arte, by Saint John.

Christ's Descent into Hell.

Among the Chester Mysteries the *Descent into Hell* was the only one not founded on Scripture, while among the Coventry Mysteries, which were produced nearly a century later, there are, besides the *Descent,* others founded on apocryphal New Testament stories. In this, the oldest English drama now extant, is treated in independent form an apocryphal subject which belongs to the Easter cycle, and appears worked up among the French Mysteries in the Resurrection play; it is *Christ's Descent to Hades*, or *The Harrowing of Hell.* The theme, which has inspired many an English poet, early and late, has more of an epic than a dramatic character. The victorious Saviour, to whom is assigned the hero's part, leaves in reality very little room for the interference of the other actors—the powers of hell—while the patriarchs and prophets awaiting the Redeemer in Hades, are necessarily doomed to passivity. The old dramatist has, besides, missed a striking effect by making these passive characters give vent to their feelings only after hell has been conquered, when the

action merely wanted its crowning effort. In the *Gospel of Nicodemus,* and in the majority of derived descriptions, it is these very characters who begin the action. The light which goes before the Saviour and penetrates into the under-world fills their hearts with hope, and they predict the arrival of him for whom they wait. But, in throwing away this motive, the poet indeed sought and obtained an effect of another kind; his hero opens the drama, which begins before the gates of hell and afterward penetrates into the interior, and here he advances alone into the dim unknown in the greatness of his purpose.

But the kernel of this drama—very different from the traditional form—is a controversy between Christ and Satan. Satan defends himself with the statement that what one has bought is his own: "Adam came hungry to me, and as suzerain I made him do homage; he is mine and all his race for an apple which I gave him." But the Saviour replies: "Satan, mine was the apple which thou gavest him; the apple and the apple-tree were both my creation. How could you, then, dispose of goods which belonged to another? Since he has, therefore, been bought with my own, he is mine by right." Satan now gives up the point of right, betakes himself to entreaty, and appeals to the reasonableness of it: "Retain heaven and earth for thyself; leave the souls in hell to me. Let me retain what I have; what you have you may peacefully possess." "Be silent!" speaks the Lord, "for you have cast double-ace"—the lowest throw in dice—"Do you think that I have died for naught? By my death mankind is redeemed. Those

who have served me shall dwell with me in heaven. You shall suffer greater pains than anyone in this place." Satan: "None can do worse to me than I have already borne. I have suffered so great evil that it is indifferent to me where my lot fall. If you rob me of mine, I will also rob you of yours. I will go from one man to another, and draw away many from you." The Lord: "God knows, I will speak a word with you, and compel you to keep peace. I will bind you so firmly that you will rob me of few. Only the smaller devils of little power will be permitted, henceforth, to go among men, and to get possession of all those who will not resist them." The threat is at once followed by action. Christ advances on the gates of hell, the sentinel takes to flight, the gates fall down; the Lord binds Satan, who must abide in chains till the last day. And now the Saviour turns to those for whose deliverance he has come, and they welcome him with reverence and shouts of joy. Adam, Eve, Abraham, David, John the Baptist, Moses, pray in words of deepest fervor, humility, repentance, and anxious hope; the response of the Redeemer breathes love and peace.

The technics of the drama, as shown in this play, are in a very low state of development; the representation is simple, dignified, very curt, in broad outlines, somewhat angular and stiff; no overflowing pathos, although deep feeling; no fun, and no vulgarity. Whatever the poet wants to say to his hearers, he says with deep earnestness and does not fail of his effect. We say "his hearers," for hearing was, in this case, more important than seeing. This drama is an example of the species

which has not yet quite cast the shell of the liturgical period.

The Coventry Mystery of *Christ's Descent into Hell* consists of only six verses, in one of which Christ expresses his determination to release the souls "from the cindery cell." But the Chester Mystery of the same subject is a tedious paraphrase of circumstances in the *Gospel of Nicodemus,* to which is added in one of the copies, by way of epilogue, the lamentation of a cheating Chester ale-wife, on being compelled to take up her abode with the devils, one of whom she endeavors to wheedle by calling him her "sweet Mr. Sir Sathanas," and from whom she receives the compliment of being called his "dear darling." The following are the verses in the Coventry play:

Nicodemus, xii. 3. In the depth of hell, in the blackness of darkness, on a sudden there appeared the color of the sun like gold, and a substantial purple-colored light, enlightening the place.

xv. 1. While all the saints of hell were rejoicing, behold Satan, the prince and captain of death, said to the prince of hell.—2. Prepare to receive Jesus of Nazareth himself, who boasted that he was the Son of God, and yet was a man afraid of death, and said, My soul is sorrowful even to death.

xvi. 19. The mighty Lord appeared in the form of a man.—20. And with his invincible power visited those who sat in the deep darkness by iniquity, and the shadow of death by sin.

xvii. 13. Then the king of glory, trampling upon death, seized the prince of hell, deprived him of all his power.

xix. 12. And taking hold of Adam by his right hand, he ascended from hell, and all the saints of God followed him.

Certainly one would prefer to sit through a performance of the Coventry rather than the Chester Mystery.

Jacob and Esau.

Almost an entire generation separates this oldest of extant English drama from the next. In *Jacob and Esau*, as the play may be styled, the dramatic art is still of a low standard; the situations are not used to advantage; the characteristics show little depth or originality. The poet is full of reverence for his subject, and dramatizes faithfully what seems to him its most important points. He writes in good verse, in simple language, but seldom exerts his powers of invention, and he evidently requires no special means of excitement to fascinate and affect an audience not spoiled by such exhibitions. But so much greater are the demands he makes on the imagination of his spectators. We are told nothing in the drama of Jacob's long residence with Laban, and the poet does not even feel the necessity of filling up the time in which the episode occurs by suggesting any other action, but simply skips the whole period. Perhaps Jacob left the stage for some minutes and returned, bringing back with him Rachel, Leah, children, and dependents. As we read the drama, one and the same monologue of Jacob begins on the journey to Haran and ends on his journey home. The poet observes closely the unity of idea, that is, Israel's election. Hence, the scenes between God and Jacob are much more important in his eyes than those describing Jacob's relation to Esau; and the

reconciliation between the two brothers, which ends the drama, makes this idea perfectly clear, at once explaining the basis on which their destinies are founded. "God reward thee, brother," says Jacob in taking his leave, "that thou hast so wished to kiss thy servant." "No, Jacob, dear brother," replies Esau, "thou art my lord by the decree of fate. Let us go together, thou and I to my father and to his wife, who loves thee, brother, as her life."

Jacob and Esau has been preserved almost in its original form, partly because the subject, being complete in itself, and without direct reference to the church feasts, did not induce later poets to undertake a revision or a new treatment. But those plays which formed the centre of the Religious drama experienced all sorts of metamorphoses, in which early forms were often replaced by later alterations. This is specially true of the Christmas and Easter plays. Both contained the germs for a rich development, which proceeded in two different directions and finally joined together the branches of the mighty trees which had grown originally from the same soil.

In the first place, the *Adoration of Christ by the Shepherds* stood in the closest relation to the *Birth of Christ*, the nucleus of the Christmas plays; but to the shepherds in St. Luke's Gospel are added the three kings in St. Matthew, and in connection with them appear the *Flight to Egypt* and the *Slaughter of the Innocents at Bethlehem*. From St. Luke, again, was taken the *Purification of Mary*, which, indeed, caused great difficulties to bring it into the proper chain of events.

The Christmas cycle of the liturgical Mysteries embraced from the first two principal groups. The one, proceeding from the Gospels, and partly also from the Apocrypha, had for its central point the birth of Christ. The other had for its nucleus the long line of prophets, and its text also was drawn from an old portion of the Christmas service and from a sermon long attributed to St. Augustine, from which, in time, several old Testament dramas were detached and gained a more or less independent existence. An important outgrowth from this group is seen in the Anglo-Norman Mystery of *Adam*. Thus the principal point with the English dramatists was the developing of the two parts, each separately, and then joining them together, and here they evidently did not know what to make of the original nucleus of the one part, viz.: predictions of the prophets; wherever these appear in later English Mysteries they seem like pieces out of the liturgy which the living organism of the freer religious drama was unable to assimilate.

The Easter plays also formed themselves into a richly but more simply developed whole. The entire history of the Passion in all its separate points—the conspiracy, the last supper, the arresting, the trial, the scourging, crucifixion, and even the descent into hell—preceded the resurrection; and the subsequent manifestation and the conversion of the unbelieving Thomas followed; the ascension, probably even in the earlier versions, formed the termination.

The Christmas cycle and the Easter cycle now converged; a few intermediate incidents, as the baptism of

Christ or the raising of Lazarus, were inserted, and by putting the last judgment at the end, the whole course of sacred history was thus included, though doubtless with omissions.

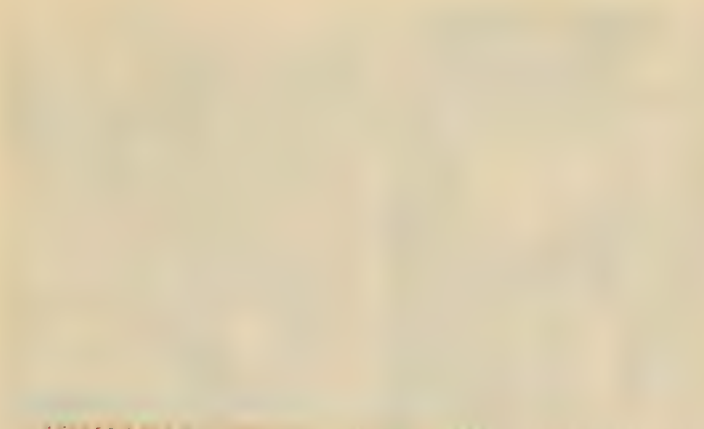
Corpus Christi Plays.

An important step toward joining the Christmas and Easter cycles was the institution of Corpus Christi day, on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, coming thus in June. It is the feast of Transubstantiation, and began to be generally observed early in the fourteenth century. Such a celebration, which referred to the very core of all their worship, brought together under the open sky and in the finest season of the year a whole population, lay and clerical, presented a long procession, pompous and imposing, with its beautifully ornamented altars and stages, and was made still more striking by its figurative representations and tableaux vivants from sacred history. That season was specially appropriate for introducing a play intended as an exposition of the historic basis of their faith from beginning to end. It was, therefore, to be expected that the English Mysteries should have usually developed into Corpus Christi rather than into Chester Whitsuntide plays.

The trade corporations—each, as a rule, with its own festival, which it was in the habit of celebrating by dramatic representations—were now confronted with a general festival which had to be celebrated in common. And as all the guilds were represented in the procession of Corpus Christi day, it soon became a

point of honor with each to take part in the great festival, by arranging a certain portion, making, as it were, a smaller play within the greater, and having it acted by members of the guild. Where this was not possible several guilds or trades shared in one of these minor plays, the choice or allotment depending for the most part on purely external circumstances—such as regard for the mise en scene. Thus the play of the *Three Kings* was assigned to the goldsmiths, because of the crowns that had to be made; carpenters and seamen were almost indispensable for the construction and equipment of Noah's ark; smiths were valuable at the play of the *Crucifixion*. That which depended originally on free choice, mutual agreement or accident, or which was arranged on the advice of the clergy, came afterward under the control of the guild office and formed a precedent and a duty. Then, indeed, what was at first considered as an honor and a pleasure became a burden. Certain of the guilds, assigning various reasons, refused to take part in the play, and while some undertook more than one, others declined to participate, offering instead a money payment.

The collective Mystery plays were of necessity composed, from the very beginning, out of a multitude of small plays, differing in importance, but each in itself independent. Being the work of different poets, and often belonging to different epochs, these plays showed the greatest variety of treatment, tone, style and metrical form. Sometimes a play has little reference to the one preceding it. Things which the spectator has seen played before his eyes are repeated to him again in a



MOVABLE STAGE FOR THE ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

After an original drawing by A. Russell

In the movable stage erected for a Religious Dr[illegible] [illegible] by the players, and the third is for hell and the damned, with an orthodox devil on guard..

long discursive introductory monologue and the details are often full of inequalities and contradictions. Under the circumstances, a piece originally independent was easily worked up by a dramatist for his own particular cycle. When a guild took into its own play the play of a neighboring guild the actions of both were generally grouped into one, or welded together.

In the rendering of the play the guilds took even more pride than in its subject matter or its mounting. It was not only a question of costume and outfit, but also of action and speech; not only whether Noah's ark, when finished and filled with all its animals, produced an illusion, but also whether, in constructing the ark, Noah showed himself a skillful carpenter; whether the crew of the ark, during the flood, conducted themselves as real sailors or merely as land-lubbers. The smiths, or whatever craftsmen performed at the play of the *Crucifixion*, made it a point of honor to affix the Saviour on the cross in a workmanlike manner, and thus the details of their trade, with all its difficulties and accidents, come to a severe trial on such occasions, making the dialogue entirely subordinate. And here the influence of the actors is seen upon the writer, who, to please them, sometimes inserts in a prominent position what is merely incidental, and at great length places the trite and vulgar side by side with the noble and unique.

Stages.

In towns the stage was movable; the scaffolding of the theatre was wheeled about from street to street,

and halted in due order before the houses of the magnates for the production of the play; in the country, on the other hand, it was the audience that moved, and a long series of immovable scaffoldings remained fixed in one place. In the towns the route of the theatre cars moving through the streets showed the way the Corpus Christi procession had gone; in the country, the row of stage scaffolding indicated, either by their fixed position or their order, the altars and stations which the procession had passed, or at which it had stopped. But in both cases a portion of the street or green, between the scaffolding and the spectators, was reserved for the stage, though perhaps the actors sometimes found it difficult to keep this space or proscenium clear from the curious and thronging masses.

The stage was spread out in breadth for single pieces as well as for the whole play—for the age had little idea of perspective. In many cases the chief stage of a play had two or more subordinate stages beside it, and the free space between these left room for movement from one to the other. The spectators could then see the dramatis personæ disengaged, and could observe them in all their goings. This was decidedly unfavorable for artistic illusion. The imagination of the spectator had sometimes to give a considerable extension to the space actually before his eyes. Time is measured by the space traversed by the dramatis personæ, and the precedent established in *Jacob and Esau* occurs again and again, though rarely to the same extent. Such freedom in the manipulation of space and time is not favorable to the development of a finished form of

art; on the other hand, it allows the dramatist to say everything that is in his mind.

But how remarkable is the contrast between this idealistic nature of the stage as a whole and that timorous realism with which individual subjects are presented—almost in a plastic form. Even if the costumes and equipment were traditional, typical, symbolical; even if Christ, the Virgin and the apostles appeared in dresses, the cut and color of which were taken from the plastic art of the age; even if the pillar was gilt to which the Redeemer was bound during the scourging —all these were deviations from the historic truth of which an audience in the fourteenth or fifteenth century could not possibly be conscious. On the whole, the impression produced by the stage was somewhat similar to that made by looking at old maps, where towns, mountains, clumps of trees, animals, are painted large and draw our eye, and are out of all reasonable proportion to the plain country around them and the foreshortened distance.

For pageants the stage and its setting were much more elaborate than for the Religious drama proper. Of one held in 1546, at the crowning of Edward VI, there is a discription extant which reminds us somewhat of the preparations made for the coronation of the reigning sovereign of Britain. As the king passed along Cheapside on his way to Westminster, he came to a double scaffold at the end of the great conduit, which ran wine and was richly garnished. Near it stood four children, representing Grace, Nature, Fortune and Charity, all of whom made speeches, and there

were eight ladies handsomely apparelled, personating Wisdom and the seven Liberal Sciences. The scaffold was hung with cloth and silk, the upper portion containing a heaven with sun and stars and clouds that spread abroad, letting down a lesser cloud of white sarcenet fringed with silk, powdered with stars and beams of gold, from which a phœnix descended to a mount of sweet shrubs on the lower scaffold. Here a crowned and golden lion made motions of amity. On the nether scaffold, a child, arrayed in regal garments, was seated on a throne, representing the king, and was supported by children personating Royalty, Justice, Truth and Mercy, all making speeches, as did the ladies. Beside the throne was the golden fleece, guarded by two bulls and a serpent, their mouths breathing forth flames. A smaller conduit in Cheapside was richly hung and ornamented, with an old man crowned, sceptred and arrayed as Edward the Confessor, and on a stage at its foot was St. George, the patron saint of England, in complete armor. But with all this mediæval flummery we need not further concern ourselves.

IV.

Further Development of Religious Drama.

The Religious drama, and the whole Mystery cycle, spread over all England and beyond it—as Dublin testifies. But the soil and atmosphere of every place was not equally propitious to the development of this art. It throve much better in the northeast than in the southwest of England; better in the districts originally settled by the Angles than in districts settled by the Saxons; better in those parts where the homilies on the Scriptures and the Biblical poetry of a high cast were native from early times, than where saintly legends attained their highest cultivation and cyclic development. We have very scanty information about the fate of the English drama in its first narrow home. Some towns, especially in the East-Anglian districts, preserve the recollection of theatrical representations of religious plays; we know in particular that at Wymondham, near Norwich, such plays were usually acted every year. From Norwich itself we have still extant a play of the grocers—on the *Creation of Eve and the Fall*—in two manuscripts of the sixteenth century, and many chapters might be written of others in various shires

and parishes; but our remaining notices must be of the briefest.

Abraham and Esaac.

Only a single remnant of the East-Midland dramaturgy in the heyday of the Mysteries is preserved, and this may have been acted either by itself or as part of a cycle. It is the play of *Abraham and Isaac,* written in Suffolk. In its present form the drama belongs to the fifteenth century, but it can be shown that there was an older copy, belonging to the fourteenth. Compared with *The Harrowing of Hell,* and even with *Jacob and Esau, Abraham and Isaac* shows decided progress. The poet moves more freely, has some idea of painting characters and situations, and according to his ability, he makes the most of his pathetic subject—which is one of the few themes of a dramatic nature treated at that period. He gives us at least a glance at the relation between father and son, just before the father receives the terrible command to sacrifice his only child.

Abraham receives the command itself with too much coolness and resignation—a traditional error which arises from reverence for the subject. He speaks like a moral preacher, not like a father. But when he begins to make his preparations for the execution of the horrid deed, his suppressed feelings begin to assert themselves, and the internal conflict grows more violent as the development proceeds, although—considering the nature of the hero and the views of the poet—the solution cannot appear doubtful for a single moment.

The childlike innocence of Isaac is beautifully set forth, and in a way that must have touched the father's heart, and that still greatly moves the spectator. When they arrive at the fatal spot the boy speaks kindly and cheeringly to his father; but Abraham's dejected look rouses his astonishment, and when he sees no animal for sacrifice a foreboding of the terrible design first strikes him. Abraham seeks in vain to quiet him by referring to God, who will provide an animal for sacrifice. But Isaac replies:

Isaac.—Yes, father, but my heart begins to quake to see that sharp sword in your hand. Why do you bear the sword drawn so? I wonder greatly at your looks.

Abraham.—Oh! Father of Heaven, I am so full of woe, this child breaks my heart in two.

Isaac.—Indeed, father, you must have something in your mind that grieves you ever more and more.

Abraham.—Oh! God of Heaven, send me thy grace, for my heart was never half so sore.

Isaac.—I pray you, father, let me know whether I am to suffer any harm or no.

Abraham.—Believe me, sweet son, I may not tell thee yet; my heart is now full of woe.

Isaac.—I pray you, dear father, hide it not from me, but tell me something of what you have in mind.

Abraham.—Oh! Isaac, Isaac, I must kill thee!

Isaac.—Kill me! father, alas! what have I done? If I have in aught trespassed against you, you may make me full mild with a rod; but with your sharp sword kill me not, for I am only but a child, father.

Abraham.—I am full sorry, my son, to shed thy blood; but truly, my child, I have no choice.

Isaac.—Now I would to God my mother were here on this hill; she would kneel for me on both her knees to save my

life. And since my mother is not here, I pray you, father, change your looks, and kill me not with your sharp knife.

Abraham now tells him God's command. As soon as Isaac understands the idea, that the will of God requires the sacrifice, he yields to his fate. He prays no more for his life, he murmurs not at his destiny; but, in this meek resignation his ingenious prattle is now quite overpowering. He first wishes his father to conceal his death from his mother, and then again requests him to convey to her his last farewell. He is afraid of the sword, and prays Abraham to put a cloth over his eyes, that he may not see it. On the other hand he is unwilling to await the stroke with his hands bound. He prays for his father's blessing, and asks forgiveness for everything in which he may have offended him. Every word cuts Abraham's heart to the quick, and lets loose in him a new tempest of emotions. And thus there are delaying motives which always keep coming up again and again, and always fresh means for lengthening out, with a touching fascination, the terrible scene on which the interest of this drama depends. None of the other Middle-English dramas on this subject have given to this scene such richness of motives and variations. At first it is Isaac who appears to stay the progress of the action, then again Abraham, whom his son beseeches more than once to make an end. There is, indeed, action and reaction throughout between the participants; the crisis is thus prolonged and the spectators are held in breathless suspense.

The happy issue is related quite as finely as the pain-

ful crisis. The angel that brought Abraham the joyful message has departed. The patriarch praises God for His grace, and orders his son to arise. But Isaac is still expecting the fatal stroke. When he understands from his father that God has granted him his life, the joy of his heart breaks forth; but doubt and fear have not yet quite left him; in the conflict of his feelings he requires repeated assurances that the danger is over. And how naive and touching are the words he addresses to the ram which is to die in his stead:

> "Oh! sheep, sheep! Blessed mayst thou be, that ever thou wert sent down hither."

Or the words he speaks when stirring the fire:

> "But father, when I stoop down low! you will not kill me with your sword, I trow."
> "No fears, sweet son; have no dread, my mourning is past."
> "Yes! but I would that sword were in a sheath, for certainly, father, it makes me full aghast."

The poet has thoroughly seized the contrast between the severely tragic elements of the situation and the naive charm of the tender, childlike sentiments, and has presented it lovingly and with the finest perception. But his style and metre are very far from the height of what seems to be his ambition.

The Religious drama was developed with great vigor and individuality in Northumbria—especially in Yorkshire. Towns like York, Leeds, Beverly, here formed

centres for the art of the cyclic plays, which were represented yearly.

The Towneley Mysteries

The country fair, held once a year at Woodkirk, in the neighborhood of Wakefield, seems to have been chosen by the guilds of Wakefield and other neighboring districts for acting those Corpus Christi plays which have become famous under the name of the Towneley Mysteries. The manuscript, which is said to have formerly belonged to Woodkirk abbey, and was afterward for a long time in possession of the Towneley family, whose name it bears, dates from the beginning of the fifteenth century; it contains thirty or thirty-one plays, and its cycle is the result of the development of the entire fourteenth century. The general impression it produces is as if made up of a number of instantaneous pictures, which confirm the different phases of its consecutive historic growth. We have in *Jacob and Esau* a precyclic drama almost in its unaltered form; but the *Descent to Hell*, which gives to the subject a new treatment and comes nearer to the Latin source, is worked out in an entirely independent way. The central drama, which has for its subjects the conspiracy of the Jews, the Lord's supper and the seizure of Christ, is a good example of the blending into one of two or more plays originally independent; and vice versa the play of *St. Thomas* is recognizable as an independent new formation of an action which appeared at first merely as an episode.

On the whole, the drama of the North utilized in its

own way all outside influences and assimilated them. The Corpus Christi plays of Woodkirk, with few exceptions, bear a decidedly Yorkshire stamp; many of them remind us still more of the motley crowds, mostly of rustics, who attended that fair. They contain a peculiar mixture of roughness and gentleness, rudeness and tenderness. The treatment of the favorite theme of Abraham's sacrifice is highly characteristic, when we compare it with the Brome drama. The Yorkshire Isaac is by no means such a virtuous hero as the East-Anglian; he never for a moment thinks of declaring himself ready to die; on the contrary, he fights boldly to the last for his young life, though only in childish words. Abraham, indeed, does not tell him that it was a question of God's command. For what use would it have been? The patriarch violently suppresses his feelings, and, having once determined to do the unavoidable, he seeks to have it over as soon as possible. He goes so far as to deceive Isaac when ascending the mountain: "We shall rejoice and be glad when this affair is finished." When on the top of the mountain Isaac asks unsuspectingly the well-known question, and Abraham answers, "Now, son, I cannot longer deceive you; you were always obedient to me—always did as I wished; yet, in sooth, you must die, if my wish be fulfilled." The conflict between father and son, and the conflict of the father's heart, now begin. There is nothing of the fine speeches, of the elegant coquetry which runs out to such a length in the East-Anglian piece.

A popular humor and a coarse, comic vein seem to

belong naturally to those who produced the Towneley Mysteries. The characters and situations in which these qualities are generally seen are indeed typical in the old drama. Pharaoh, Cæsar, Augustus, Herod, Pilate are horrid tyrants, inhuman madmen, braggadocios and bullies; Noah is an honest, God-fearing man, who has great difficulty in managing his stubborn wife; Cain is a coarse, selfish peasant; and so all the other types after their kind. The means by which the risibility of the public is to be excited are generally of the same coarse nature—rude, obscene jokes, curses, abuse, scolding and cudgeling. But by these means the Woodkirk dramatists make not only a very rich effect, but often a much more striking application than their colleagues in the South and West. They lay on the color more strongly, risk bolder and more striking combinations; frequently they give more powerful motives, and above all they sometimes make real, life-like figures.

Cain.

A perfectly successful, though highly disagreeable figure, is the *Cain* of the Towneley Mysteries. He is a Yorkshire peasant, malicious and niggardly, higgling with God about every sheaf in the sacrifice, and animated with the desire of cheating God, if possible. He has, besides, a surly, easily irritated disposition, and a clownish rudeness; he is a master at reviling, cursing, ribaldry, and likes to show his cleverness on the smallest excuse, or sometimes, indeed, without any excuse at all. A grim, sarcastic humor lends to these qualities the

proper relish, and in this mood he spares God just as little as he does the righteous Abel. The development of this character, whose comic side has irresistibly attracted poets and spectators alike, has prevented the terrible tragedy of the action from fully attaining its proper due.

The Deluge.

The domestic scenes between Noah and his quarrelsome spouse are very forcibly set forth in the Woodkirk play of *The Deluge*. The obstinancy of Mrs. Noah borders on the incredible—neither threats nor persuasions, nor the sight even of the approaching flood, can induce her to enter the ark. She sits on a hill spinning, and will not move from the spot till she coolly spins out her task. Not till the water is lapping at her feet will she go on board. Noah, however, is not represented here as so patient as in other places. He gives his better half what she deserves—a sound thrashing; she does not ask for his pardon, but defends herself as well as she can, and so we have a free fight, in which Noah is knocked down by his wife and calls out, "Wife, let us cease; my back is almost broken." "And I am beaten black and blue," says she, "so that I know not what to do." Their sons interfere and put an end to the scene.

Downright wickedness and mad rage characterize the conduct of Caiaphas in the play of *Smiting on the Face*. The torrent of abuse and curses which he pours forth against the Saviour is simply boundless, and it is with the greatest difficulty that Annas restrains him

from continuing in his mad fit and from falling with his own hands upon the defenseless sufferer.

A Woodkirk dramatist has introduced into a play on the *Last Judgment* some really original scenes about the devils. These scenes satirize all ranks in the most grotesque and vivid manner, and produce a much greater effect than the most eloquent preacher could have done with the same subject. This is especially true of the passage spoken by the young infernal humorist, Tutivillus, the cleverest of all the devils.

The Shepherds.

The rustic Yorkshire humor is shown in its brightest side in the play of the *Shepherds*. This part of the Christmas Mysteries had previously received considerable attention in the French drama, the effect of which upon the English was probably greater than would appear from the text that has been preserved. But just here the powers of assimilation, and, at the same time, the creative talent of the English poets, are most clearly seen. And in this respect the Towneley collection again bears the palm. It contains two different Shepherd plays, variations of the same type, in the same metre and style, but of very different character.

In the first piece the secular action does not deserve the name of a dramatic plot; it is occupied only with the mentioning of circumstances and events which might occur every day. The first two shepherds fall into a quarrel about the emperor's beard. The third,

on arriving, good-humoredly establishes peace between them, and he tells of the good condition of the cattle feeding up to their knees in grass. They sit down to a rustic meal, for which each produces his quota and which turns out liberal enough. The beer jug passes round and inspires them to sing. At the end they put the remains of the banquet in a basket for the poor and go to sleep; the third shepherd not forgetting to cross himself against the influence of elves. The voice of the angel soon wakes them from their rest.

The second play is in the nature of a farce, and though inserted into the Biblical drama, is completely detached, and seems to be there only for its own sake. The sheep-stealer Mak, who shows a certain relationship to Shakespeare's Autolycus, associates with the shepherds and robs them, while sleeping on the plain, of a fat ram, which he quickly carries home to his wife, and then returns to lie down with the other sleepers. When the sheep is missed on the following morning, and the owners knock at Mak's door in the hope of finding the lost ram in his house, they meet with a strange reception. Mrs. Mak, they are told, has been delivered of a child; her fine, young boy is in the cradle, and they must therefore keep very quiet. They insist, however, on searching the house and yard, and have therefore to listen to much abuse from the improvised mother. The search is in vain. At length the cradle attracts their attention; they wish to see the child. "Let it alone," says Mak; "it's sleeping; if you awake it, it will cry. I pray you, go away." One of the shepherds then goes to kiss the child. "What the devil is

this? it has a long snout!" But even after they have seen the horns of the ram and a known mark on its ear, Mak and his spouse still protest their innocence. "It was bewitched by an elf," says the mother. "I saw it with my own eyes. As the clock struck twelve it was thus misshapen." The shepherds determine at first to bring the thievish pair before the judge, but finally decide to pardon them. Exhausted with the exertions of their search, they go to sleep, and now Christmas begins.

York Mysteries.

If we go from Woodkirk to York, the contrast between town and country becomes very striking. We see, indeed, the same kind of people, with the same original tendencies, but these appear somewhat refined; certain rustic excrescences, too gnarled and knotty, are laid aside, and, in other respects, the Towneley Mysteries appear in more attractive form.

The Corpus Christi plays of York have much in common with those of Woodkirk. Five pieces—the *Departure of the Israelites*, *Christ in the Temple*, the *Descent to Hell*, the *Resurrection* and the *Last Judgment*—are almost identical in the two collections, and whenever any deviations occur the York collection generally contains the earlier form. There is also a close affinity in the design and treatment of a large number of the York and Woodkirk plays, and even verbal resemblances sometimes occur. The York Mysteries, as a whole, give evidence of that manly character, that strong realism, that mixture of roughness and tender-

ness, that coarse-grained humor, which we have seen in the Towneley plays as the typical expression of the North English people.

At the trial of Christ before the high priest, Annas and Caiaphas have, as it were, changed parts; yet the York Annas is very far from displaying that spiteful wickedness which astonished us in the Woodkirk Caiaphas. The York Mystery shows a certain moderation, and tries to keep closely to its subject. But it is by no means insipid; it is full of life, full of dramatic action, and excellently suited to satisfy the outer as well as the inner sense of a great population fond of spectacles and eager for all kinds of excitement. Vividly dramatic is *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem*—a subject which must have especially attracted the inhabitants of a large town. The history of the *Passion* has in particular received a rich and vigorous finish, and many figures and episodes are interwoven with the main action, of which the tremendous pathos is effectively heightened by humorous and coarse realistic accessories.

Examples of excellent characterizations are not rare in the York collection. Among others the character of Joseph in contrast with Mary is well kept up, although there is sometimes a difference of conception observable in the different plays. In the play of *Jesus in the Temple*, the shyness of Joseph, an uneducated peasant, in appearing before learned people, and the desire to let his more highly-educated wife speak instead of himself, is taken from real life, as is, also, in a previous passage, the comparative placidity of the foster-father in contrast to the anxiety of the mother about their lost

son. This latter contrast appears heightened, and also differently conceived, in the *Flight to Egypt*. Here Mary is the all-loving, anxious mother, the weak woman, almost losing her senses in her care for what is dearest to her; Joseph on the other hand is the active, faithful, helpful husband. In the charming play of *Christ's Birth* this relation is quite changed. It is here the good-natured Joseph who is careful and anxious about the storm and the rain, the cold and the darkness; while the holy Virgin, full of trust in God, and happy in the grace accorded her, has heart and mind fixed only on the great and wondrous miracle which she bears within her. Joseph leaves her alone in the stable to go for fire and light. Mary commends herself to the divine protection, and then gives herself up to her joyful hope, until painlessly her child is born. She worships it, and with a timorous devotion takes it in her arms. All this is presented with the tenderest and most touching grace, and what follows is kept at the same high pitch. On his return home we hear Joseph, weak from age, complaining of the bitter cold. Suddenly a bright light shines upon him, which fills him with astonishment. On entering the stable he perceives the child upon its mother's breast, and lovingly they both praise and worship it. The divine babe is laid in a manger, and the silent worship of the animals that try carefully to warm the tender being completes the picture.

By the religious guild, or fraternity, of Corpus Christi at York a play was annually performed that must have been, in its time, one of the most extraordinary

entertainments of the age, doubtless drawing a vast concourse of people from the surrounding country. Every trade in the city, from the highest to the lowest, was obliged to furnish out a pageant at its own expense on this occasion. The subjects were from the history of the Old and New Testaments, each guild representing some particular part, and speaking suitable verses. Judging from the ordinances for their regulation, as still preserved in the city's registers, the performances were apt to be of a somewhat turbulent character. No man is to go armed, "to the disturbance of the peace and the play, and the hindering of the procession," under pain of imprisonment and the forfeiture of the weapons. The craftsmen must bring forth their pageants in due order, with good actors properly arrayed, under penalty of one hundred shillings, every player to be ready between four and five in the morning. And says the final clause: "Father William de Melton, Professor of Holy Pageantry, and a most famous preacher of the word of God, having exhorted the populace that they would cause to be removed all public concubines, wherefore the mayor, by consent of the community, ordains that they should depart the city on pain of imprisonment, unless any of them should find good security that she would not exercise her illegal vocation for the future."

At this celebration, which was in 1415, fifty-four pageants are mentioned by the town-clerk. First was, "God the Father Almighty, creating and forming the heavens, angels, archangels, Lucifer, and the angels that fell with him into hell;" the tanners performed

this; the next was, "God the Father in his own substance, creating the earth, and all which is herein, in the space of five days," represented by the plasterers.

The third, "God the Father creating Adam of the slime of the earth, and making Eve of the rib, and inspiring them with the spirit of life," was played by the card-makers. The last, "Jesus, Mary, twelve apostles, four angels with trumpets, and four with a lance with two scourges, four good and four bad spirits, and six devils," was performed by the mercers. The town-clerk's entry also mentions the torches and torch-bearers in the procession: "Porters, eight torches; coblers, four torches; cordwainers, fourteen torches," and so forth. "And it is ordained that the porters and coblers should go first, then the weavers and cordwainers," the procession concluding with the councilmen and mayor.

Like the Woodkirk cycle, that of York also affords a great variety of forms of style and rhythm, but we do not meet with such old forms in the latter as in the former; the York cycle has also fewer cases indicating tampering or interpolation by a mixture of different metres in the same play. A remarkable feature in the collection is the frequent occurrence of strophes, of which the opening song has terminal rhymes and consists of alliterative long lines. The majority of the plays referring to the Passion are written in this form, which is also found in other places.

The fraternity of Corpus Christi at York was extremely popular. Several hundreds of persons were annually admitted, and it was supported chiefly by the

annual collection made at the procession. Instituted about 1250, the religious ceremony of the play and procession was so much esteemed as a piece of sacred pageantry that it continued to be acted in that city far into the reign of Queen Elizabeth. What has been said of the Mysteries at York will suffice to convey some notion of the general method of representing them in other cities, and there is little doubt that the corporations strove to outvie each other in the elaboration and splendor of their exhibitions.

Newcastle-Upon-Tyne.

Corpus Christi day at Newcastle-upon-Tyne was celebrated with similar exhibitions by the incorporated trades. The earliest mention of the performance of Mysteries there is in the ordinary of the coopers for 1426; in 1437 the barbers played the *Baptizing of Christ;* by the ordinary of the goldsmiths, plumbers, glaziers, pewterers and painters, dated 1436, they were commanded to play at their feast the *Three Kings of Coleyn*. In the books of the fullers and dyers one of the charges for the play of 1564 is, "Item for three yards of cloth with lining for the coat of Goddes, 3s. 2d." From the ordinary of different trades it seems that about 1578 the Corpus Christi plays were on the decline, and never acted but by special command of the magistrates of Newcastle. The only vestige that remains of the Newcastle Mysteries is a portion of *Noah's Ark*, wherein God, an angel, Noah and his wife and the devil are the characters. In this, as well as the

Chester Mystery of the same subject, the wife of Noah is a vixen; the last words she says to him are:

> The devil of hell thee speed
> To ship when thou shalt go.

It appears from the earl of Northumberland's *Household Book*, 1512, that the children of his chapel performed mysteries during twelve days at Christmas, and at Easter, under the direction of the master of the revels. Bishop Percy cites several particulars of the regulated sums, payable to "parsones" and others, for these performances. The exhibiting of Scripture dramas on the great festivals formed part of the domestic regulations of the ancient nobility; and what is more remarkable, it was as much the business of the chaplain to compose plays for the family as it was to perform the offices of religion.

Cornwall.

In Cornwall, interludes from Scripture history were played in the Cornish language. These were called the Guary Miracle plays, and sometimes performed in the open fields, at the bottom of earthen amphitheatres, the people standing around on the inclined plane, which was usually forty or fifty feet in diameter. The players did not learn their parts, but were followed by a prompter, called the ordinary, with the book in his hand. Long after the Mysteries had ceased elsewhere, and the regular stage had been established, they were exhibited in Cornwall to the country people, who

flocked from all sides to hear and see the devils and devices that were provided to delight the eye as well as the ear. Two manuscripts in the Bodleian library contain the Cornish plays of the *Deluge*, the *Passion*, and the *Resurrection*.

According to Strutt, when Mysteries were the only plays, the stage consisted of three platforms, one above another. On the uppermost sat God the Father, surrounded by his angels; on the second the glorified saints, and on the last and lowest, men who had not yet passed from this life. On one side of the lowest platform was the resemblance of a dark, pitchy cavern, from whence issued the appearance of fire and flames; and when it was necessary the audience was treated with hideous yellings and noises in imitation of the howlings and cries of wretched souls, tormented by relentless demons. From this yawning cave the devils themselves constantly ascended to delight and to instruct the spectators. The following is a brief description of hell by an old author who had probably seen it exhibited on the ecclesiastical stage:

> **An hideous hole all vaste, withouten shape,**
> **Of endless depth, orewhelm'd with ragged stone,**
> **With ougly mouth and griesly jawes doth gape,**
> **And to our sight confounds itselfe in one.**

The Mysteries were usually acted in churches or chapels upon temporary scaffolds. When enough performers could not be found among the clergy, the church wardens employed secular players, and some-

times borrowed or hired dresses and other necessary paraphernalia from neighboring parishes.

Coventry Mysteries.

Plays similar to those enacted at York were presented throughout the midland counties, but the fame of all was eclipsed by the Coventry Mysteries, which, in the fifteenth century, drew audiences from far and near, including several monarchs and many of the nobility. The Cotton collection, now in the British Museum, contains a manuscript, belonging for the most part to 1468, which contains a whole cycle of Mysteries, and in spite of occasional doubts this has always been considered as a contribution from the Franciscans. Inside the larger groups there is often a smaller cycle of plays, each with its own prologue and epilogue. Thus at the beginning of the story of *Christ's Trial and Passion*, we learn that the first part—the *Entrance into Jerusalem*, *Last Supper*, *Betrayal*, and *Arrest*—had been performed in the preceding year. In contrast with the Chester cycle, which shows the smoothing hand of an editor, the Coventry plays seem to be the product of a purely external agency, which at times has placed the most heterogeneous elements side by side, almost without consideration. In both there is evident a strong didactic and moralizing tendency, but in the Coventry groups this is united, in much larger degree, with the epic and lyrical tendencies of the Chaucer school. There is also a considerable difference in the introduction and treatment of materials, especially as to the legends of

the Virgin, as in the *Gospel of the Virgin's Birth* and the *Trial of Joseph and Mary*, while in the pageant of the *Resurrection* Christ first reappears to his mother. The devil is also an important figure in the Coventry Mysteries, his importance and popularity increasing toward the end of the middle ages; so that he no longer confines himself to pageants, where alone his presence is required.

Upon the whole, it would seem that the Coventry Mysteries belong to a period when the religious drama had begun to lose much of its freshness and simplicity. Instead of the saucy humor of former days, we have only a grave, insipid narrative, even Noah's wife having changed her character and lost her old attractiveness. Nor do we find compensation in a number of broad jokes or the coarse treatment of extremely delicate subjects.

Yet in the Coventry Mysteries there are not wanting passages of strong dramatic force, with many touching scenes and attractive motives. A deep impression is sometimes produced by keeping close to tradition, and at times the diction rises to real pathos, especially in the story of the Passion, as in the episode of *Mary at the Foot of the Cross*:

O my sone! my sone! my derlyng dere!
What have I offendyd the?
Thou hast spoke to alle tho that ben here
And not a word thou spekyst to me!

To the Jewys thou art ful kende,
Thou hast forgive al [their] mysdeds;

And the thef thou hast in mende,
For onys harkyng mercy before he is mede.

A! my sovereign Lord, why wilt thou not speke
To me that am thy modyr in peyn for thi wrong!
A! hert! hert! why wilt thou not breke
That I were out of this sorroe so stronge!

Jesus commends his mother to the beloved disciple, and offers her consolation. With the most violent affection Mary falls upon the cross, embracing it. Everybody tries to quiet her and to take her away. Mary Magdalene reminding her that the sufferings of Jesus can only be increased by the sight of her own. But the distracted mother answers: "I pray you all, leave me here and hang me on this wood beside my dear son; for where he is there is my place."

Joseph and Mary.

"The Pageant of the Company of Sheremen and Taylors in Coventry, as performed by them on the Festival of Corpus Chri-ti," is a manuscript belonging to the corporation of Coventry, bearing the following inscription: "Thys matter newly correcte, be Robart Croo the xiiij day of Marche, fenysschid in the yere of owre lord god mcccc & xxxiiij." Its events are from the Annunciation to the murder of the Innocents. Isaiah speaks the prologue and prophesies the incarnation. Joseph's jealousy being the subject of a conspicuous scene, a portion is extracted from the original without translation into modern English.

Joseph, perceiving the Virgin's pregnancy, taxes her with inconstancy in his absence, and inquires who had been with her. She asserts her innocence, and affirms that she had no one but the heavenly messenger.

Josoff.—Sey not soo, womon, for shame ley be,
Ye be with chyld, soo wondurs grett,
Ye nede no more th'r of to tret
Agense all right;
Forsothe thys chylde, dame, ys not myne,
Alas! that eyv with myn yne,
I suld see this syght.
Tell me, womon, whose ys this chyld?

Mare.—None but youris, husebond soo myld,
And thatt shalbe seyne.

Josoff.—But myne, alas! alas! why sey ye soo,
Wele awey, womon; now may I goo
Begyld, as many a nothur ys.

Mare.—Na, truly sir, ye be not begylde,
Nor yet, with spott of syn, I am no defylde;
Trust yt well, husebonde.

Josoff.—Husebond! in feythe, and that acold!
A waylle awey, Josoff! as throw ur' olde,
Lyke a fole, now ma I stand and truse.
But in seyth, Mare, th'u art in syn,
Soo moche ase I have cheyrischyd the dame and all the kyn,
Behynd my bake to s've me thus.
All olde men insampull take be me,
How I am begylid, here may you see,
To wed soo young a chyld.
Now fare well, Mare, I leyve the here alone,
Worthe the dam and thy warkis yche one;
For I woll noo more begylid be, for frynd nor fooe.
Now of this ded I am soo dull,
And off my lyff I am so full, no further ma I goo.

An angel, whose explanation removes Joseph's jealousy, desires him to comfort Mary, for,

> ———a cleyne meydin ys sche
> Sche hath conseyved with owt any trayne
> The seycond p'son in trenete.

The homely adoration of the infant by the shepherds is prettily told.

> The first Shepherd gives his pipe to him and says:
> I have nothyng to present with thi chylde
> But my pype; hold! hold! take yt in thy hand,
> Where in moche pleysure that I have fond.
> The second Shepherd presents his hat:
> Holde! take thow, here, my hatt on thy hedde,
> And now, off won thyng, thow art well sped.
> The third Shepherd offers his gloves to him:
> Have here my myttens, to pytt en the hondis,
> Other treysure have I none to present the with.

Public Schools.

From very early times, when regular theatres were unknown, and itinerant minstrels acted in the halls of the nobility at Christmas, plays were performed, as still they are, by the pupils of the great public schools of England. Such are the classic dramas at Westminster, Eton and other colleges. At Eton, the ancient consuetudinary, as it is called, containing all its old and original customs, relates that about the 30th of November the master was accustomed to choose such Latin stage plays as were most excellent and con-

venient to be played in the following Christmas holidays before a public audience. Plays were also acted by choir boys, who probably acquired a turn for theatrical representations from their annual ceremonies of the Boy Bishop, which became common in almost every religious community that was capable of supporting a choir. The scholars of St. Paul's school, in London, were, till a comparatively recent period, in great celebrity for their theatrical talent, which was in full exercise upon the Mysteries as early as the reign of Richard II, for in 1378 they presented a petition to his majesty, praying him "to prohibit some unexpert people from presenting the history of the Old and New Testament to the great prejudice of the clergy, who have been at great expense in order to represent it publicly at Christmas."

Skinner's Well.

But the more eminent performers of Mysteries in London, were the society of parish clerks. Between the 18th and 20th of July, 1390, they played interludes at the Skinner's well, as the usual place of their performance, before King Richard II, his queen and their court; and at the same place, in 1409, they played the *Creation of the World*, and subjects of the like kind, for eight successive days, to splendid audiences of the nobility and gentry from all parts of England. The parish clerks' ancient performances were memorialized in raised letters of iron upon a pump on the east side of Rag, now Ray street, Clerkenwell. The following was part of the inscription: "Round this pump, as history

informs us, the Parish Clerks of London, in remote Ages, commonly performed sacred plays. That custom caused it to be denominated Clerks'-well, and from it this parish derived its name"—Clerkenwell.

The waters were greatly esteemed for their healing qualities, especially by the friars and nuns who lived nearby; for in this neighborhood, now one of the most thickly populated districts in London, stood a Benedictine convent, where solemn choral chants, with the peal of the deep-toned organ, were often interrupted by cries from an adjacent bear-garden and from a place still known as Hockley-in-the-Hole, where rude and noisy sports were carried on to the great annoyance of the devout.

Sixteenth Century Plays.

After the Reformation, King Edward VI is said to have written a comedy, and persons of various ranks produced an incredible number of religious comedies and tragi-comedies, some of which were polemical. One was entitled, *Jesus the true Messiah;* another, the *New German Ass of Balaam;* a third, the *Calvinistic Postilion,* and so on. Mysteries of this kind were composed by the once celebrated John Bale, who, having been a Catholic of the Carmelite monastery at Norwich, became a student at Oxford, renounced the tenets of Rome, and took, as he says, "to wife, the faithful Dorothy in obedience to that divine command: Let him that cannot contain, marry." He obtained church preferment, was successively bishop of Ossory, and archbishop of Dublin, with a prebendal

stall at Canterbury, where he died in 1563. One of this protestant prelate's Mysteries, written in 1538, to vindicate the doctrine of grace against such as held the doctrine of free will and the merit of works, is entitled, a "*Tragedy or Enterlude,* manyfestying the chiefe promyses of God unto man," etc.; the characters are: God, Adam, Noah, Moses, David, Isaiah and John the Baptist; and at the end of each act is a kind of chorus which was performed with voices and instruments.

In 1573 was printed "A new Enterlude no less wittie than pleasant, entitled *New Custom*," written with a view to vindicate and promote the reformation against "Old Customs." The characters are allegorical, and discuss the comparative merits of the doctrine held by the two churches with more earnestness than temper. *New Custom*, however, cannot be properly called a Mystery, but a Morality. Theatrically considered, Mysteries are dramatic representations of religious subjects from the Old or New Testament, or Apocryphal story, or the lives of saints. Moralities are dramatic allegories, in which the characters personify certain vices or virtues, with the intent to enforce some moral or religious principle. Moralities were of later origin than Mysteries, but they existed together, and sometimes each partook of the nature of the other.

Though there is no existing record of the representation of Mysteries in England since the latter part of the sixteenth century, yet, for some time after the Reformation, Mysteries and Moralities continued to be written expressly to promote the new order of things. They lashed the Catholics unsparingly, who do not

appear to have ventured to retort. The performance of Mysteries was forbidden by Henry VIII, and though restored by Mary, yet no attempts were made by such means to stay the fall of the papal power in England. It had received a mortal shock; and the chief trace that the old hierarchy left of its dramatic existence was the acting of plays in churches, which, though forbidden in 1542, were continued by the choristers of St. Paul's cathedral and the chapel royal as late as the reign of Charles I.

Puppet-Shows.

A puppet-showman's bill, in the reign of Anne, announces scriptural subjects as follows: "At Crawley's Booth, over against the Crown Tavern, in Smithfield, during the time of Bartholomew Fair, will be presented a little opera, called the *Old Creation of the World*, yet newly revived; with the addition of *Noah's Flood;* also several fountains playing water during the time of the play. The last scene does present Noah and his family coming out of the ark, with all the beasts two by two, and all the fowls of the air seen in a prospect sitting upon trees; likewise over the ark is seen the sun rising in a glorious manner: moreover a multitude of angels will be seen in a double rank, which presents a double prospect, one for the sun, the other for a palace, where will be seen six angels ringing of bells. Likewise machines descend from above, double and treble, with Dives rising out of hell, and Lazarus seen in Abraham's bosom, besides several figures dancing jigs, sarabands, and country dances, to the admiration of the spectators;

with the merry conceits of Squire Punch, and Sir John Spendall."

Perhaps the adventure of Punch in the common puppet-show gave rise to dramatic performances of greater celebrity. Punch always comes up gay, heedless, and very well satisfied with himself. He is a sensual, dissolute, hardened character, who beats his wife and child, has a thorough contempt for moral reputation, disregards the advice of the priest, knocks him down, dances with his female associates, is a little frightened by a spectre, becomes as bad as ever, does not fear the devil, fights with him, is conquered, and finally carried off to hell.

The *Tatler* of May 14th, 1709, quotes a letter from Bath, describing the rivalries of Prudentia and Florimel, two ladies sojourning at that fashionable watering place Florimel had bespoken the play of *Alexander the Great,* to be acted by a company of strollers, and the letter-writer was to be of her party, but says, "Prudentia had counterplotted us and had bespoken for the same evening the poppet show of the *Creation of the World.* She had engaged everybody to be there, and to turn our leader into ridicule, had let them know that was to be made the most like Florimel that ever was seen. On the morning of the performance the poppet drummer, Adam and Eve, and several others that lived before the flood, passed through the streets on horseback to invite us all to the show, and Mr. Mayor was so wise as to prefer these innocent people, who were to represent the Christians, before the wicked players who were to personate Alexander. When we

came to *Noah's Flood*, Punch and his wife were introduced dancing in the ark. Old Mrs. Petulant desired both her daughters to mind the moral, and then whispered to Mrs. Mayoress, 'This is very proper for young people to see.' Punch, at the end of the play, made Prudentia a bow, and was very civil to the whole company, making bows till his buttons touched the ground."

Shakespeare mentions the performance of Mysteries in these puppet shows, which, in his time, were known as "motions," his Autolycus, for instance, "compassing a motion of the *Prodigal Son*." Such entertainments found favor with the people, and even in the nineteenth century were much in demand. In one performed on Twelfth Night, in 1818, the prodigal son was represented as carousing at the Swan Inn at Stratford, while, on every fresh call for liquors, the landlady was seen to score double. There was also *Noah's Ark*, with *Pull Devil, Pull Baker*, or the last judgment upon a baker who sold short weight and was carried to hell in his own basket.

Ancient memories and myths displayed their vitality at the annual festivals celebrated by the people, especially on the eves of St. Peter's and St. Paul's and the evening of St. John's day. On the last of these days the play of *St. George* was the favorite performance, and in this were introduced the earliest of English traditions. On all these occasions the houses were adorned with leaves; fires were kindled and there were processions on foot or horseback, with men in armor, the figures of giants and dragons, and sometimes the devil in a coat of feathers. On the first of the May

moon the people assembled under the open sky to do homage to the month and to bring home May trees and plant them before their houses. Among the plays given at this festival were performances from the legend of Robin Hood.

Robin Hood.

In a sixteenth century play of *Robin Hood*, still extant, all the well-known characters are introduced, as they appeared at the May games, with Robin as the lord of misrule, attended by Maid Marian as queen of the May; by Friar Tuck, Little John and the rest. In one of his sermons, Bishop Latimer complains that, going to preach in a certain parish on a holiday, he found the church door locked, because, as he was told, all the people had gone to hear Robin Hood, and to him the good bishop was fain to give place. At a May game at Shooter's hill, near London, Henry VIII was entertained by the officers of his guards, two hundred in number, all clothed in green and headed by one who personated the famous outlaw. Meeting the king as he was taking his morning ride, attended by the queen and members of the court, he invited him to see how he and his companions lived, and to this the monarch consented. Thereupon he was conducted by the archers blowing their horns to a green wood under the hill, and ushered into an arbor of boughs, formed into chambers covered with flowers and sweet herbs. Apologizing for the want of more delicate viands, Robin said to the king: "Sir, we outlaws usually breakfast upon venison, and have no other food to offer you." The

king and queen then sat down and were served with venison and wine, being well satisfied with their entertainment.

Ever since the time of Henry VIII *Robin Hood,* with its bold, outlawed hero, its jovial priest, its pretty maid and other attractive personages, has been, as even to-day it is, a favorite theme for dramatic and operatic treatment, nor can it be said that frequent repetition has staled its charms or sated the appetite for one of the most romantic of mediæval romances garbed in theatrical vesture.

V

Miracle and Moral Plays—Pageants.

Though Miracle plays were the dramatized legends of the saints and had little to do with Scriptural story, the term was commonly applied also to the Mysteries which grew out of the celebration of Christmas and Easter festivals. Of the Middle-English Miracle plays, in the stricter sense, almost nothing is preserved; for the dramatized legends of the Virgin, in the Coventry cycle, or even in the York Corpus Christi plays, cannot be classed among them, owing to their close connection with the Mysteries. Besides, our knowledge of the dramatic treatment of lives of the saints, or miracles of the saints, is confined to traditionary names, as Catherine, Christine, Fabian, Crispin and Crispian. We may be able, however, to form an idea of such dramas from the various legends of the saints paraphrased in dialogue and action into the simple technology of the Mysteries.

The Credo.

It is harder to say how it stood with the play of the *Credo*, mentioned in the records of York. This play,

together with the books and banners belonging to it, was bequeathed, in 1446, to the Corpus Christi guild, existing at York since 1408, by one of its members, a priest named William Reveter; and, according to his will, it was afterwards acted by the brotherhood every tenth year at Lammas. Reliable signs justify us in concluding that it was by no means a recent play even in the year 1446, and that it was a well-known and favorite piece. The drama was of very great length, and was therefore probably a small cycle. The twelve articles of the *Credo* may have been represented by twelve pageants, but how? Were the contents of each article presented to view as a symbolic drama? In that case, the whole, like the separate parts, would have belonged to the Mystery species. Or was the origin of each article referred to one of the apostles, according to the well-known tradition? Or, finally, did each separate case treat of the wondrous recompense or punishment for belief or unbelief?

The Sacrament.

Among other Miracles, those were very popular which referred to the sacrament of the altar, and a multitude of legends treat of this theme. Bad men manage to get possession of a consecrated host, which they then pierce with daggers, and throw it into the fire or boiling oil. Blood flows from the violated host, and in the fire, or wherever else it has been thrown, Christ's figure appears in his glorified form. The miracle and the crime that causes it are manifested;

the venerable host is conducted solemnly to the church and receives special adoration; the guilty are usually punished terribly.

A miracle of this sort, said to have taken place at Heraclea in Aragon in 1461, is dramatized in an English play, which must necessarily be of about the same date, and must therefore have affected the spectators with the whole force of a recent occurrence. A rich merchant, Aristorius, of Heraclea, who introduces himself to the public in the same way as the Herods or Pilates of the Mystery plays, has as his house-companion a priest, Brother Isidore. Isidore guards the key of his church rather carelessly, and even forgets to lock the tabernacle door. A very rich Jew, Jonathas, offers the Christian merchant, who is eager to make money, a hundred pounds for securing him a consecrated host. Counting on the negligence and deep sleep of Brother Isidore, the merchant completes the bargain; the Jew receives the host, and the Christian Judas the hundred pounds. Jonathas now begins at once, with the help of his four servants and accomplices, his horrible experiments with the holy sacrament, and does not even stop when its wondrous power is revealed by manifest signs and to his own hurt. The entire scene is carried out with the most vivid realism.

There is also a comic intermezzo of great effect. Jonathas has lost his right hand in his sacrilegious experiments, and this now forms a motive for the introduction of the miracle doctor, one Brundyche, and his servant. The doctor knocks at Jonathas's door, and offers him his medical assistance. The Jew, however,

declines his aid, and the doctor's servant is so insistent that both are driven off with blows. The Jews still continue their criminal business till the appearance and voice of the Saviour induce them to desist. The repentant Jonathas, who by God's favor has had his hand restored, now hurries to the bishop and confesses all. The bishop repairs to the sinner's house, and the sanctified host is brought in solemn procession into the church. The report of the new miracle spreads; Aristorius repents of his crime and does penance; Isidore receives a strong pastoral exhortation; the Jews confess publicly their guilt and desire baptism, which the bishop administers. Thus ends the play of the *Sacrament*, in this case without torture or execution, and to the joy and edification of all.

Interludes.

English princes had their own plays at court, as is attested by documents since the time of Edward III, and these certainly did not consist solely of pantomimes and masquerades. In the pauses between the courses at state banquets, performances of all sorts were in general favor, and from this arose the name of Interlude as an appellation for a dramatic poem of very elastic character.

Even in the earliest English times were heard in palaces other forms of poetry than the minstrels' lay; for poems in dialogue were also recited, and there the mime, or jester, was probably no unknown guest. The productions with which the Anglo-Norman Jongleurs were accustomed to regale their chiefs and princes were

no doubt largely in dialogue, and frequently in dramatic form. In such an atmosphere a purely secular comic drama could grow up. Where the epic farce, the poetic contest in dialogue form, and the impromptu jests of the buffoon and the mime, were already to hand, it was an easy step to put their contents into dialogue and action.

When the English language was beginning to supersede the French, some dramatic farces were even then being composed. Any considerable development of this species was, however, impossible at a time when the interest in native compositions was limited to the burgess classes, and when the Religious drama drew the whole attention to itself. But we have already seen, especially in the country Mysteries of Woodkirk, how the farce within the Religious drama itself was gaining decided recognition.

One independent dramatic farce of that early time is, indeed, extant, although in a fragmentary form. We have the beginning—presumably somewhat more than a third of the whole—of an *Interlude de Clerico et Puella*, which was probably composed in the reign of Edward I. It is in the Northumbrian dialect, and the author, like his hero, appears to have been a clerk or student. As far as this fragment goes only three characters appear, and, if we do not count the puppy, there were probably no more. Not one of the characters introduces himself. We know them only from the dialogue, and the dialogue is all action. The clerk, entering Maria's house, says:

Clerk.—A beautiful good morning to you, miss.

Maria.—You are welcome, sir, by Saint Michael.

Clerk.—Where is your father? where is your mother?

Maria.—By God, neither of them is at home.

Clerk.—The man must be happy who gets such a maid for his wife.

Maria.—Out, out, by God and Saint Leonard! For loose lovers and promise-breaking clerks I have no room in house or hall.

We are thus set right into the middle of the action at a stroke. When the paramour is refused and sent off, in a second scene we see him immediately visiting the house of the procuress. "God bless you, Aunt Elwis," he says. No monologue, no consultation with a friend, allows the interest to slacken. Everything of that sort is simply taken for granted. The clerk says to Aunt Elwis: "They sent me here for your help and advice." Compare with this the verbosity and clumsiness of the ordinary sort of Mysteries and Miracles. The fragment breaks off in the middle of the second scene.

Serious subjects were also represented in the Interludes. Well-to-do artisans were accustomed to regale themselves with a Miracle play at their common festal dinner on the day of the patron of their guild. And since the Mystery had the greatest dramatic interest, it was here readily played as an Interlude—though perhaps only in pantomime. During the banquet at the Council of Constance, on January 24th, 1417, the English fathers caused to be performed, by tableaux and gestures, the *Birth of Christ*, the *Adoration of the Three Kings*, and the *Slaughter of the Innocents*, and invited

the Council and many burgesses to the feast and exhibitions. Seventy years later, when Henry VII was in Winchester at the birth of his eldest son, Prince Arthur, *Christ's Descent to Hell* was played before him, as an Interlude, by the choir boys. During the reign of the same king another species of drama, hitherto unmentioned, began to lay claim to the ground occupied by the Interludes, and that was the Morality, a species which, in the history of the drama, unites the middle ages with modern times.

Origin of the Moral Plays.

The Morality or Moral play owes its origin to the same spirit that introduced the allegorical tendency into religious literature and court poetry; that is, to the effort to illustrate moral doctrines and abstract ideas in bodily form. Unfortunately, in doing so, the drama, as well as the romance, took the wrong path. Instead of illustrating the universal by the special, the distant by the near, the abstract and intellectual by the concrete and personal, writers were satisfied with raising the abstract substantive into a person, with dressing out this personage according to its meaning and making it speak and act. The subtlety of the age took a pleasure, as it were, in hunting abstractions to death, without being shocked by the gross incongruity arising from such consistency. Virtues and vices, mental faculties, inclinations, physical, spiritual, and moral influences form the persons of the Moral plays, which included also such general conceptions as man and the human race.

The Mysteries had undeniably a great influence on the formation of the Moral plays. The latter followed the former in the arrangements of the stage, the manner of performance, costume and equipment, and in important technical points; they had the persons of God and the devil in common, though these were fashioned according to necessity in both classes of plays. Even the verbose style of the Mysteries seems to have been occasionally borrowed.

The Paternoster.

The oldest English Morality of which we have any record was called the play of the *Paternoster*. Its first performance at York, which took place probably in the reign of Edward III, made so deep an impression that a guild of men and women was formed expressly for the purpose of insuring its more frequent and regular performance. It appears that the play formed a series or cycle of Moralities; the different parts opposed a vice or sin to the corresponding virtue, the name of one of them being the *Play of Lazarus*. The relation of these parts to the whole can be inferred from mediæval confession books and moral tracts; the entire series probably contained seven sections.

The Castle of Constancy.

The oldest extant Moral plays belong to the fifteenth century, and these are the *Castle of Constancy; Spirit, Will and Understanding*, and *Humanity*, all

treating in various ways the same theme—the conflict between good and evil in the soul of man. It is, in fact, the same subject—the fall and redemption of man—as is discussed in the Mysteries, where, however, it is considered as concrete and historical, while in the Moralities it is abstract and typical. Of these three plays, the *Castle of Constancy* was probably the most appreciated. It shows a thorough knowledge of theatrical effect, an effort to throw as much as possible into external action, and an endeavor to satisfy the eye by a rich display of scenery. The stage was of circular form. In the centre rose a castellated structure, which gave the play its name; beneath it was a bed for the hero of the drama, Humanum Genus, or the Human Race. At the circumference were four smaller stages, equally distant from each other and placed at the four points of the compass: in the east a stage for God, in the south for the Flesh, in the west for the world and in the north for the Devil, who is here called Belial. The action covers the whole life of the hero from birth to death, Humanum Genus appearing as a new-born child, as a youth, as a man and as a graybeard.

As soon as the child appears, we see the angel of Good and the angel of Evil holding converse with him. He follows the evil angel and is led to Mundus, the World, who gives Joy and Folly, and very soon also Slander, for his companions. By the latter, who is a female personage, Humanum Genus is introduced to Greed, who soon presents to him the other deadly sins. We see the hero, when a young man, choosing Lust as his bedfellow; and, in spite of the endeavors of his good angel,

he continues in his sinful career until at length Repentance leads him to Confession. At forty years of age we see him in the castle of Constancy, whither he has been brought by Confession, surrounded by the seven most excellent Virtues; and here the case becomes exactly similar to the one in the *Vision of Piers Plowman.* The castle is surrounded by the three evil powers and the seven deadly sins, with the devil at their head, and with foot and horse is closely besieged. Humanum Genus commends himself to his general, who died on the cross; but the Virtues valiantly defend the castle, and Love and Patience and their sisters cast roses down on the besiegers, who are thereby forced to retire.

But, in the meantime, Humanum Genus has become an old man, and now yields to the seductions of Greed, who has succeeded in creeping up to the castle walls. The hero quits the castle and follows the seducer, but his end is nigh at hand. The rising generation, represented by a boy, demands of him his heaped-up treasures. And now Death and Soul appear upon the scene. Soul calls on Mercy for assistance, but the evil angel takes Humanum Genus on its back and departs with him along the road to hell. At this juncture the well-known argument begins, where Mercy and Peace plead before God on the one side, and Justice and Truth on the other. God decides in favor of Mercy; Peace takes the soul of Humanum Genus from the evil angel, and Mercy carries it to God, who then pronounces judgment, and afterward the epilogue of the play. The *Castle of Constancy* is one of the best of the English

Moralities, resembling somewhat *Everyman* and sharing with it the popular favor.

Spirit, Will and Understanding.

Compared with the *Castle of Constancy*, *Spirit, Will and Understanding* shows greater theological learning, but less knowledge of the theatre, and still less of the development of dramatic art. It satisfies the eye, however, by its rich costumes and the large number of figures appearing in character, though among them are eighteen dumb personages, who are merely presented to the spectator and dance and quarrel among themselves. There is far too little action; the long speeches between Wisdom, the second person of the Godhead, and the Soul are extremely wearisome, and though a greater interest is excited by the scenes where the power of wickedness is shown, the dialogue is lacking in dramatic force. We are merely told about things which should be presented bodily before us, both in action and speech, but there is at least one exception—in the scene where Lucifer, in the figure of a gay cavalier, seduces the three powers of the Soul, beginning by upbraiding them with contemplation and idleness. Spirit answers:

Spirit.—He is not idle who is with God.

Lucifer.—But there is a time for everything: for praying, fasting and working. Is it right that a man who has a wife and children and servants to support should lie on his side and live only for prayer and his own ease? He who acts thus is not from God; God was well pleased with Martha.

Spirit.—Yes, but he was still better pleased with Mary.

Lucifer.—But even the worst of the two had everlasting bliss. Is that not enough?

Spirit.—The contemplative life is best.

Lucifer.—I cannot think so; as for God himself, what sort of a life did he lead among men? Answer me: Was he ever lost in contemplation?

Spirit.—His whole life was a teaching and example for man.

Lucifer.—No, not as far as I have learned. Sometimes he associated with sinners; sometimes, also, with the righteous; sometimes he worked, sometimes prayed, sometimes suffered. That was a varied life of his here on earth, and ye should also live like him.

Spirit.—What you say may be right. * * * *

And so it goes on till the seducer has completed his work with Spirit, Will and Understanding.

The results of the seduction are feebly portrayed, and the final return to good is illustrated by means which have nothing whatever to do with dramatic art. Wisdom comes again, quite unexpectedly, on the stage, and the Soul also reappears, but shockingly disguised, "more horrible to look upon than any devil." Further on, six youngsters in the form of devils creep out from her hideous cloak and turn in again to their lurking places. Anima, or the Soul, becomes aware of her shocking transformation, and Spirit, Will and Understanding perceive that they are guilty of Soul's degradation. All four quit the stage, and then "the Soul sings most pitiably in long drawn-out tones, as people generally sing at Easter week." Wisdom remains behind and delivers a long speech. The Soul then comes

back once more with the Five Senses walking before it, Spirit and Understanding at either side, and Will following. They are all now again in their first dress and in their original beauty.

Humanity.

Humanity, the third of the three oldest Morality plays, is a somewhat strange production. The comic parts are very prolonged and full of droll conceits and obscene jests, while most of the serious passages are very tedious. But the play shows a distinct tendency to individualize the action and character. The good powers are represented only by the figure of Grace, and the real crisis for the hero, who is named Mankynde, is called forth by the belief that Grace is dead. Seduction comes to him mostly in the forms of Uselessness and New-Fashion, and when their first attack has failed, on the advice of Mischief, they conjure up a devil to help them, who is to represent the Lusts of the Flesh. This devil is no other than Tytivillus, the humorous imp, whom we have already met in the Woodkirk play of the *Last Judgment*. The dramatic idea does not seem clear, nor consistently carried out; but the poet has many happy thoughts, as the manner in which Tytivillus begins his operations against the hero. When Mankynde is resting himself in the evening after a hard day's work, the imp steals his implement of labor.

The Moral play of *Everyman* probably belongs to the time of Edward IV. Later there were numerous adap-

tations and translations into German, Dutch and Latin, in which its original tendency was sometimes reversed. The moral in *Everyman* is almost the same as in the three preceding Moralities, and is fully as orthodox in treatment; the hero is also the same, but the fable has quite a different and much more original cast. We are not here shown human life throughout its course, but only the close of life, the time for settling accounts, which, however, throws its light on the whole previous career. Everyman is summoned before the judgment-seat of God by the messenger, Death. In vain he begs for delay and seeks to bribe the messenger; it is of no avail; go he must. He then looks about for a guide, a support—for some one who may plead his cause before God. He applies to Friendship, to Kindred, without success; to Riches, but these, packed up as they are, cannot be taken away. Then he goes to Good Works, but Good Works lies on the ground, tied down with the chain of Everyman's sins. Good Works, however, refers him to her sister, Knowledge, and she leads the suppliant to Confession. As soon as Everyman is adorned with the jewels of Penitence, Good Works is freed and receives the use of her members. With the help of Knowledge, Everyman then puts on the dress of Contrition; and now, accompanied by this faithful sister-pair and also by Prudence, Strength and Beauty, with the Five-Senses as Counsellor, Everyman arranges his last concerns; he makes his will, receives the holy sacrament and the last unction, and then goes forth upon his way to the grave. Then, in sight of the tomb, Beauty, Strength, Prudence and Five-Senses abandon

him; Knowledge accompanies him till she sees what becomes of him; Good Works alone remains true to him till the end, and follows him into the grave.

The English dramatist has treated this fable from a specifically church point of view, or even in a narrower clerical sense; on the occasion of Everyman's going to the sacrament, he makes Five Senses give an infinitely glorified dignity to the priesthood; but yet he knew how to give clear expression to this subject, and in a diction thoroughly dignified and serious, entirely free from the coarse jests so usual in Moral plays.

The faults of technicality in the Moral plays above considered are about the same as in the Mysteries; there is the same looseness of structure, the same freedom, and generally the same awkwardness in connecting the scenes. In both we notice that the chief characters usually introduce and describe themselves; which, indeed, was not so easy to avoid in the allegorical drama as in the Biblical. In the Moral plays, the intriguing, seducing powers have almost always a comic or humorous tinge, which reminds us of the way in which Pharaoh, Herod, Pilate, the torturers and the devils are characterized in the Mysteries. The sermons take up more space in the Moralities than the dogmatic discussions in the Mysteries, and, besides, the Moralities are by no means wanting in dogmatics. The allegoric action is not so clear in many cases as the Biblical, and the abstract figures have naturally less attraction for us than the corporeal.

But, nevertheless, they represent a decided progress. In the first place, it is a point of the greatest moment

that the poet was here free to invent his story for himself, or was even obliged to invent it. The choice of subjects is, indeed, fixed and limited, for the theme is always one and the same; but its variations are infinite. The will and power of the dramatist are shown by the way he conceives his task; the setting of the dramatic problem also devolves upon him, and to set it and solve it, he must exert his ingenuity and powers of observation. In order to find his fable, he must analyze psychologically; in order to breathe life into his characters, he must paint from life. What does it matter whether his persons are called Luxuria or Avaritia? They look like a young voluptuous girl, or a gray-bearded man, and they must speak and act like such. In this way the poet learns to create typical images of character, to invent situations where they can reveal themselves, and thus to gain the interest of the spectators; to inspire them with fear, or, perhaps, more frequently to provoke their laughter. In the discourses of his dramatic figures he mixes up all sorts of references to contemporary manners and a multitude of satirical touches and to the figures themselves he gradually gives a stamp of greater individuality. Instead of abstract names, or side by side with them, types begin to appear; even in the *Castle of Constancy* we see Slander calling herself by the expressive epithet of "back-biter." By and by concrete figures, though perhaps still typical, are introduced in increasing numbers. In the first place we see the fool, the harlequin, with his wooden sword, associated, under the name of Vice, as a companion to the Devil to assist him in his business, but frequently

also to wrangle with him, to mock him, to ride on his back and to belabor him with his sword. This figure appears in the later dramas in all sorts of special functions and under a multitude of different names. Indeed, even in Mankynde he appears practicing his nonsense under the name of Myscheff, and perhaps, also, in the *Castle of Constancy* as "Detractio" or "Bakbyter." Besides moral types, like Hick Scorner, the frivolous scoffer, in the course of time we see appearing also social types, like the Tavernkeeper.

Inception of the Modern Drama.

Thus gradually the allegorical drama grew up into that real living drama which draws its material from active human life; or, at least, it prepared the way for it, and, having once seen the light, hastened its development. This is especially true of comedy. The drama has, indeed, everywhere to create individuals of a typical character; in tragedy the individual comes more to the front, whereas in comedy the type is made more prominent. The highest models of the comic species are represented by the foolish habits or characters of their age, in whom certain vices, failings, weaknesses are, as it were, embodied. And the greatest comic poets have never quite given over the illusion of being able to correct and reform mankind.

In the Mysteries not only were the subject and the idea unalterable, but the way in which the subject and idea affected each other was equally unchangeable. The power of expression was exceedingly defective. The

idea in the finished work still seemed to be something strange and external—conception and execution did not correspond. It was only by a whole cycle that the subject could be exhausted, and this cycle was composed of the most heterogeneous elements, and was, in fact, a work of accident. The single play very seldom formed a unit or whole; it seldom contained anything that could be called a dramatic action. The spectators were therefore interested only in the material. Only a few details made any æsthetic effect—such as character, situation, scenes; the whole was rarely or never dramatic.

In the Moral plays, on the other hand, the idea was everything; without it the material was not only dead, but had not even existed. The dramatic talent was thus exercised in trying to present the idea with great vividness and individuality; and at length the perception dawned that art, in imitating life and nature, should only represent the ideal side of the matter, and should everywhere make the idea stand out clearly from its subject, and more distinctly than in nature or history.

The same development took place in epic poetry, and indeed in literature generally; but this process appears most energetic in the history of the drama, which was destined to become the highest form of artistic expression for the English national mind, when filled with new life from the treasures of antiquity.

At the end of the middle ages it was yet far distant from the goal. But the passion for the theatre was vigorously roused; dramatic poetry began to work in all kinds of experiments, and even the attempts which may seem deviations from the path of progress were not

without effect on the results at last attained. We have already seen how, in the Coventry Mysteries, elements of the Moral plays had been taken up in the Biblical dramas at least as early as the middle of the fifteenth century. A singular production of a still more mixed description, belonging to the close of this period, deserves a brief description.

The Magdalene Legend.

It is the play of *Mary Magdalene*, a combination of the three species—Miracle, Mystery, Morality—with the Miracle predominating. The legend of this saint intrenched upon the domain of gospel history, owing to her conversion, and to the fact that the Lord honored her by appearing to her after his resurrection, while by identifying Mary Magdalene with Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, the connection with the Mysteries was strengthened.

The whole Magdalene legend may be divided into three sections. The first adds little to what is recorded in the Bible. The daughter of rich and respectable parents, Mary inherits, at their death, the castle of Magdala—whence her name—and gives herself up to a sinful life. Divine grace prompts her to go and see Christ while he was staying at the house of Simon the leper. What follows is well known. In the second section Magdalene crosses the Mediterranean to Marseilles, and there converts, by her power of working miracles, the heathen king and queen, who are childless, and promises them a son. The king and queen

now cross, by the way Magdalene had come, to the apostle Peter, after having intrusted their goods to the saint. During a fearful tempest on the high seas, the queen brings forth a boy and dies. The body of the mother and child are left upon a ledge of rock and commended to the care of Saint Magdalene by the unhappy father. The saint, though still at Marseilles, miraculously assists the helpless couple, suckles the child and preserves the body of the mother from corruption. The king in the meantime continues his way, is instructed and strengthened in the faith by the apostle, and then begins his journey homeward. Calling at the rock, he finds his child alive and well and sees his wife waked up again to life. All three now return to their protectress, Magdalene, at Marseilles. The third section is of a Christian ascetic tone and depicts the life of the saintly penitent in the wilderness, whence she is carried by the angels into heaven, to be fed with manna and find her happy consummation.

The majority of the mediæval versions of this legend treat the first section very shortly, as being well known. But there is a number of pieces devoted solely to the second section, and, indeed, this portion was well suited for the subject of a Miracle play. Our dramatist has here, however, worked up all the three parts in his story and has taken most pains with the first section. The motives which belong to the Mysteries are treated with much tenderness—such as Christ's visit to Simon the leper, and the washing of Christ's feet; Lazarus' sickness, death and resurrection; the Easter morning; the first appearance of the risen Saviour. The descent into

hell is also referred to in the monologue of one of the devils. Figures like Herod and Pilate appear, as is common in the Mysteries, but it would certainly have been better to leave them out; even Tiberius Cæsar is brought upon the stage, and, as the mightiest personage, he opens the piece, although not the action. The poet's art is best shown when he depicts the seduction of his heroine and makes use of the characters of the Moral plays. The kings of the World and the Flesh appear with Satan in council, and in their suite come the Deadly Sins; the angels of Good and Evil also hover round, and sooner or later take part in the action. The Deadly Sins besiege Magdalene's castle. Lust forces his way in, and by his flatteries and fair words succeeds in persuading Magdalene to quit her home and follow him. He takes his victim to a tavern and orders the host to produce his best. A gay cavalier named Curiosity soon appears and pays his addresses assiduously to Magdalene. He says the sweetest words to her, dances, eats and drinks with her, and in a short time gains his end. "I am glad that we have met," says Magdalene, "I begin to love you." "Now, my darling," he says, "will you follow my advice?—we have drunk and eaten together; shall we now go to another place with each other?" "Whatever you wish, my treasure! If you go to the world's end I will never leave you, but rather die for you." They go aside, and the evil angel hurries in triumph to the three high potentates—World, Flesh and Devil—to give them the good news, and then comes back to the girl in his keeping. The next scene shows us Magdalene in a bower, thinking about her lovers—

for she has now quite a number. Waiting for one or the other of them to arrive, she lies down to sleep in the fragrant bower. The good angel now comes near and rouses her conscience.

All these scenes show a keen perception, and breathe a certain delicate grace. The poet has seized the abiding womanly traits in Magdalene's character, and he reveals the same knowledge of woman's nature in other passages—in her moments of compunction and after her conversion. In the further course of his story, however, chiefly in the fabulous parts of the legend, he seems anxious to have done with his subject. He begins to cut it shorter, and to be satisfied with the barest necessaries. But, nevertheless, his drama swells out to an immense size for that age, for it did not admit of being broken up into a number of small plays.

In its tendency, as in its rather clumsy arrangement, the play of Mary Magdalene is a thorough product of the middle ages. Such a mixture of different species characterizes the termination of that period, and announces at the same time a more modern epoch. The varied nature of the contents, sometimes so full of adventure, the frequent changes of place, the repeated voyage, the tempest, the exposing of child and mother —all these, in connection with the realistic humorous scenes and many other things which were taken up as heirlooms of the older stage by the theatre of the sixteenth century, prepare us for those romantic plays which paved the way for the dramas of Marlowe and Shakespeare.

THE PASSION PLAY AT OBERAMMERGAU

After an original painting by Lucien Davis

And the high-priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, "Answerest thou nothing? What is it that these witness against thee?" But he held his peace and answered nothing.

PASSION PLAY AT OBERAMMERGAU,—FROM MARK XIV. 60, 61.

VI

The Passion-Play at Ober-Ammergau.

The Religious drama of the present day is practically confined to the Passion-play as performed at Ober-Ammergau, in Bavaria, and at Selzach, in Switzerland, the former attracting, at its decennial performances, some of the largest and most appreciative audiences ever gathered within the walls of a theatre. As tradition relates, the play is acted in fulfilment of a solemn vow, made by the villagers in 1633, that if God would stay the pestilence then raging among them, they would perform the Passion tragedy in token of thanksgiving every tenth year. As one of the Mystery plays frequently acted during the middle ages, it was already well known to them, but it was specially adapted in its present shape by Father Daisenberger, for thirty years the parish priest, and by him was remodelled and rewritten. By him also were trained as actors his peasant flock, and in a word he was the soul of the entire affair until his death in 1880. "I undertook the labor," he said, "with the best will for the love of my divine Redeemer, and with only one object in view, namely, the edification of the Christian world." In his object he

was certainly successful, if we may judge by the crowds that flock to this Bavarian village to witness what is probably the greatest of all religious dramas.

The Performers.

Including the conductor and the choragus, or chorus-leader, there are seventeen principal performers on the stage, selected from the most cultured and intelligent of the wood-carvers—for artistic carving in wood, chiefly of crucifixes, is almost the sole occupation of the people. In all, there are between six and seven hundred persons on the stage, mostly of the peasant class, and, including workmen, machinists and others, the theatre gives occupation to 700 out of the 1,500 or 2,000 inhabitants of Ober-Ammergau. The receipts are divided into four parts, of which the first is set apart for the poor; the second for the expenses of the theatre; the third for the school of design, the hospital and other institutions, and the fourth as a honorarium for the actors. A small surplus is also reserved for equal distribution among the villagers, so that all may share in the financial benefits of the celebration. Joseph Mayr, who was the Christus, received only $100 in 1870 and $157.50 in 1880, while Gregor Lechner, whose Judas was the masterpiece at both performances, had only some $25. The parts are distributed at a general election, held on the 6th of December, the feast of St. Nicholas, and he who is chosen as the Christus is regarded as the village king. To obtain one of the leading parts is the highest ambition of youths and maidens

alike; to girls it is held forth as a reward for virtue, and the slightest whisper against their good name bars them from participation.

Until 1830 the performances were given in the village churchyard, and it was not until 1850 that the first theatre was erected. It was a barn-like structure of boards, unroofed, except for the stage and boxes; but a new iron building has recently been erected, with room for 6,000 spectators.

As changes, not all for the better, have been made since 1890, especially among the actors—neither Mayr nor Lechner retaining their parts in 1900—the play as presented in the former year will here be given, the text in both being almost identical. The performances extend through several months, usually beginning at Whitsuntide and lasting till the close of September. The Sabbath is the appointed day, for this drama is regarded not as a pastime, but as a religious exercise. If, as often happens, the crowd has been too great for the capacity of the theatre, the performance is repeated on the following day.

The play begins at eight in the morning and lasts, with a noon-tide intermission, until late in the afternoon. There are eighteen acts, with a prologue and epilogue spoken by the chorus, who supply all the interludes while the scenes are being changed, singing nearly fifty hymns to the accompaniment of Bavarian music, taken chiefly from psalms and masses. The music is pure and classical, low, soft and sweet, chiefly in the minor key, and with a refrain or lament running through the whole, suggestive of the same sad story.

The voices are true and correct and the deportment perfect, with every action in unison, calm and dignified, graceful and full of ease.

The Chorus.

The first sight of the chorus is something which cannot readily be forgotten—the band of peasants, fresh from their daily work, every expression, every movement, full of dignity, grace, and beauty, of noble simplicity, and with an entire absence of self-consciousness. Such is the effect even to those nearest to them in the theatre, who can clearly see every motion and play of feature; no distance is needed to lend enchantment to those noble figures and faces, which never failed to charm and to win respect. There are eighteen in the chorus, eight men and ten women; the choragus, who speaks the prologues, standing in the centre of the proscenium, with four men on the right and three on the left, while five figures stand on either side of the men. Their robes and blending of color are striking and beautiful; all alike wear a long white under-tunic edged with gold round the neck and skirt, with a colored outer mantle edged with the Greek key pattern in gold, and held together by a band across the breast; a girdle round the white under robe of the color of the mantle mixed with gold; sandals on the feet, with two straps across the instep over hose of the color of the mantle; on the head a golden diadem with a cross in the floriated centre.

The costumes form a brilliant but harmonious chord

of color. The choragus is conspicuous in his scarlet mantle; next to him on the right is green, then a brownish-red, green again, and purple; the five women wear robes of bright magenta, purple, dark blue, brown-red, and light blue. The three men to the left of the choragus wear green, dark red, and purple; the women magenta, purple, a bright grey, reddish-brown, and light blue.

Little prominence has been given to the part sustained by this excellent chorus in most of the descriptions of the passion-play, and some of the spectators have even said that they were slightly wearied by it; but to those whose spirit is attuned aright, the chorus appeals to the highest sensibilities of mind and heart, and greatly assists in the long effort which such a drama requires.

The choragus greets all who have come together in sympathetic words, accepting them at once as friends who are like-minded with the performers, and exhorting them to assist devoutly at the Mystery to be set forth, which is nothing less than the redemption of the world. "All hail! welcome to the band of brothers, whom love divine hath here assembled, who wish to share the sorrows of their Saviour, and to follow him, step by step, on the way to the cross and the sepulchre." The keynote of the whole is given in the first solemnly intoned line of the prologue:

I desire not the death of a sinner, saith the Lord,

and is sustained in the lines sung as the members divide and retire to either side of the stage; while the curtain

rises, and we see the first typical tableau from the Old Testament, *Adam and Eve Driven from Paradise.*

> **Yet from afar, from Calvary's height,**
> **Shines through the night the morning-dawn**

is sweetly intoned by the choragus; from this moment the chorus becomes, as it were, our spiritual guide, and we have but to surrender ourselves to its teaching and the impressions of the scenes set forth.

The first tableau is artistically among the least successful, partly because of the contrast between the upper limbs and shoulder of the chief figure, Adam, which were bare, and the lower, which, with the feet, were clothed in tricot; the effect is displeasing, and, as there is abundant drapery of skins, it seems quite needless. Moreover, the angels are anything but angelic, though appearing to better advantage in tableau than in action.

Tableau of the Cross.

Nothing can be more beautiful than the second tableau which follows within a few minutes. The curtain has fallen on the scene of the expulsion, the chorus has formed again in a straight line, continuing the song of thanksgiving for redemption; and now, as they retire, the curtain rises, and we behold the tree of life, the cross, on a rocky mount. At its foot kneels a girl of about thirteen, clasping it in her arms; while twelve children, clad as angels, are grouped around in attitudes of adoration and thanksgiving. The grace and beauty of this picture are remarkable, as also is the motionless

acting of the infants, many of them with outstretched arms. Among them was a flaxen-haired babe of about two, kneeling with clasped hands, while an elder girl laid one hand on her shoulder, and with the other pointed to the cross. During this tableau the chorus, having, as usual, retired to the sides of the stage, kneel while they sing,

> Eternal, hear thy children's faltering prayer,

and then again exhort the spectators:

> Follow the Redeemer now beside.

The Entry into Jerusalem.

Now the first scene in the *Passions-Spiel* begins, and often as we may have read and heard of the entry into Jerusalem as acted in this theatre, the reality far exceeds our expectations. It is one of the most powerful and affecting scenes in the whole drama, as the seemingly endless crowd flowed on, men, women, and children all swayed by one sentiment, every voice joining in the choral march, full of dignity, and one of the most successful pieces in the music. The opportunity is a grand one for a musician: the distance in which it is first softly heard, the waving accompaniment of arms and green branches, the onward procession. The change in the spirit of the words for a while from praise to prayer is plaintively illustrated, while the surging crowd advances, their voices growing louder and the air more defined. It is an affecting appeal, written from

the heart, and powerful to make the listener one in sympathy with the unanimous throng.

The people come slowly on, waving branches of bracken, the action of the limbs full of indescribable grace, although those in front are half-backing, as in royal presence. We feel that every eye is fixed upon one whom, as yet, we do not see, and to whom the multitude, with but one soul, is filled with adoring homage. Old words, old visions of childhood return to the heart: the great multitude which no man may number, with palms in their hands; the everlasting song of blessing, and honor, and glory, and power to the prince of the kings of the earth; and we seem to see a faint shadow of that which shall be when every discordant note has ceased, and the soul is set free for the endless harmony of thanksgiving.

The first appearance of the Christus is apt to cause disappointment, perhaps because expectation had been wrought too high by the song and triumph of the multitude. At all events, the first feeling is that he has attempted the impossible. The attitude, also, sitting sideways on an ass, cannot but injure the effect, and the first words he utters may cause disappointment. "What do I behold? Is this God's house, or is it a market-place?" he exclaims in accents of strong indignation. But throughout the scene, the only one in which he uses energetic action, he is perfectly dignified, and his last words, "Come, my disciples, I have done what the Father commanded me to do," give us the motif which was so admirably worked out by the actor, Joseph Mayr. His conception in that respect of one "driven

by the spirit" is beyond all praise. "Lo! I come to do thy will!" was expressed in every word and action, bringing the thought before the spectators with wonderful vividness. He was possessed by his mission, and throughout the tumult and variety of the play, this calm unity of unwavering purpose was manifested with unfailing force.

The Sanhedrin.

The anger of the traders whom Christ has driven from the temple, and the zeal of the priests to use it for their own ends, are finely brought out, and the first appearance of the Sanhedrin, prefaced by the tableau of the conspiracy of Joseph's brethren, is most effectively rendered; in the coloring a wonderful use is made of blue and purple robes.

Caiaphas now appears in his white robes, impersonated by the burgermeister, Johann Lang, who now becomes the principal actor. Nothing would be accomplished but for his efforts to compass the destruction of the prophet who has won the hosannas of the multitude. In this first council every consideration is urged which could inflame the audience-zeal for the law of Moses, fear of the Romans, fear for their own safety, lest Christ should stir up the people against them, and so "we should take the place which we have prepared for him."

To the traders who are brought in, and who bitterly complain of their losses, compensation is promised from the temple treasury, and their right of trading in the courts of the temple, granted by the high priest, is re-

affirmed. Still, "fear of the people" prevails; the prophet must be taken secretly and at night, and full power is given to the chief trader, who thinks he can bribe Judas, to offer a stated sum in the name of the council.

We may have been accustomed to dwell chiefly on the supernatural causes for the sufferings of Christ; but the leading thought in the construction of the Ammergau play is the human passions by which the divine will was worked out, the natural causes for the condemnation and death of him who, a few days before, had entered Jerusalem in triumph.

The effect on the priests of the raising of Lazarus cannot be introduced, because it lies too far behind the moment when the action of the play begins. But we are shown that three causes worked together for the final tragedy—the intense resentment of the traders at his interference with their gainful traffic, and their desire for revenge; the anger of the high priest at the authority assumed by our Lord in the temple, and the avarice and selfish fears of Judas. These are woven with true art into the threefold thread which runs through the whole story, gradually unfolding the natural causes for the rapid and tremendous transition. It is remarkable how Caiaphas endeavors to inflame the passions which, both in the traders and in Judas, are working for his purpose, while the traders, on their part, appeal to the jealousy of the priests for their own authority: "Hath not the high-priest given us leave to set out for sale openly in the courts of the temple all that is necessary for sacrifice?"

The parting of Tobias from his parents is a beautiful tableau, and lasted for several minutes, while the chorus enlarges on the sorrows of a mother's heart:

Till a blessed time of meeting
To his mother's arms once more
Shall restore her darling son.

The second tableau, the *Lamenting Bride* of the Canticles, is among the least interesting, although evidently prepared with much care, and a favorite with the peasants. The music, sung by one female soprano voice, is the most ambitious in the play, and somewhat overtaxes the powers of the vocalist.

Christ and the twelve apostles now appear on the scene, and the question, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" is here put into Philip's mouth. Christ answers him nearly in the words of St. Luke: "The Son of man must be delivered to the Gentiles," etc., and replies to further questions in the words of St. John.

Simon, with the family from Bethany, meets him, and Christ accepts the invitation to Simon's house. "Conqueror of Death!" Lazarus exclaims; Mary Magdalene asks if he will accept a token of love from her, and Martha entreats to be allowed to serve him. "Do, pious souls, that which you have purposed to do;" he answers and blesses them. The peaceful scene of the supper at Simon's house contrasts finely with the tumultuous action of the greater part of the play. It is one of those which bring to mind more vividly than

anything before done how he, the perfect man, had lived and gone in and out amongst men as their familiar friend and companion. "Jerusalem!" he says, "O that my coming were as welcome to thee as it is to these, my friends!" When Mary pours the ointment on his feet, the Christus, raising his hand, says the one word, "Maria," in a tone of one touched to the heart.

The wonderful acting of Judas now becomes prominent—the dialogue between him and the Christus being lengthened from the scripture account. "What a waste!" Judas says with vexation. "Friend Judas, look me in the face. Waste on me—thy Master?" The concluding words, "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world," etc., are inexpressibly touching, as we actually behold their fulfilment, after so many centuries, in a remote Bavarian village.

The Parting at Bethany.

In *The Parting at Bethany*, which followed, Mayr's acting was admirable. "Once more, farewell, beloved, peaceful Bethany; never more shall I tarry amid thy still valleys." And in the scene with his mother he sustained his part with true feeling and dignity. Most instructive is the human tenderness, undiminished by the overpowering sense of a mission to be fulfilled, which must bring agony to her whose feelings he fain would spare. Every movement in this scene is tender and graceful, especially the clinging clasp of the hand even after he has parted from his mother's embrace and turned to leave her. The words he speaks are, like

all, distinctly uttered: "Thou wilt suffer with me, dearest mother, wilt battle with me in my mortal struggle, and also take part in my triumph." The whole dialogue, none of it from Holy Writ, is in the highest tone of resignation and mutual love. His thanks to Mary are especially touching; contrasting with the thanklessness with which a mother's devotion is too often received, as though it were a thing of course. "Mother, mother, for the tender love and motherly care which thou hast shown to me during the three and thirty years of my life, receive the tender gratitude of thy son." And nothing can be more perfect than his last words, as he gives her into Simon's care, in answer to her question: "Where shall I see thee again?" "There, beloved mother, where the scripture shall be fulfilled; as a lamb brought to the slaughter, so he openeth not his mouth."

Christ Weeping Over Jerusalem.

The fourth act begins with the tableau, containing thirty-seven figures, of the *Rejection of Vashti and Espousal of Esther.* The choragus presses home the lesson, and before the curtain rises the chorus sings:

> **Jerusalem! Jerusalem! awake!**
> **And know the peace which still may be thine own.**

This, one of the most striking pieces in the music, is introduced by a bass voice and taken up by the chorus.

In the scene which follows, of the weeping over Jeru-

salem, the Christus, in answer to the appeal of the disciples to establish the kingdom of God upon earth, again refers all to the Father's will: "Children, what ye desire will come to pass in its own time. But my ways are prepared for me of my Father; and thus saith the Lord: 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not my ways.'" He sends Peter and John to prepare the passover, and they kneel and ask his blessing. A fine piece of acting on Judas' part follows, as he shows his empty bag to the Master, and exclaims: "If only the worth of that ointment were therein! Three hundred pieces of silver! How long we might then have lived without anxiety!" He remains behind when the rest of the disciples follow their Master to the temple, and his soliloquy betrays the disposition of mind which made him an easy prey. He complains of his master's prophecies of coming trouble: "I am weary of believing and hoping. There is nothing before us but poverty and low estate. . . . I will turn back. Happily I have been provident, and from time to time have laid aside a little out of the bag in case of need. If only that fool had put the worth of her ointment into the bag it would have fallen into my hands, now that it seems likely our brotherhood will be dissolved. As it is, I must look out for some means of support."

Judas.

From this time Judas becomes the person who arouses the greatest interest among the audience, who are on the alert for anything, however grimly, amusing.

One can imagine the delight they must have taken in the grotesque parts of the older play, and their keen interest in the actual hanging of Judas, surrounded by imps gobbling up the sausages which represented the entrails of the traitor. As it is, in spite of the grave and severe treatment of the tragedy in its present version, the peasants seem quick to seize on the grotesque element, wherever it appears throughout the performance. It should be remembered, however, that most of these peasants come from a distance to see the play, and though perfectly orderly and reverent, possess all the desire to be amused in the midst of most solemn tragedy, for the satisfaction of which ample provision was made in the religious drama of the middle ages.

All the following scene, when Judas is persuaded by the scourged traders to betray his master, is followed with deep interest, and the spectators seem to listen breathlessly to the traitor's monologue, when, left alone, he weighs the probabilities of success, considering in all things the effect of circumstances on his own interest. If the priests succeed he will become a famous man, as having helped to save the law of Moses; should the Master conquer, "I will cast myself repentent at his feet. He is really good; never have I seen him repulse a penitent."

The acting and intonation of Gregor Lechner in this scene can never be forgotten, especially when the thought of meeting his master's glance nearly overwhelms him. "I shall not be able to bear his piercing gaze," he cries out, already seeming to feel the gnawing

of endless remorse for his crime. "My companions will see in my face that I am a—No! I will not be that—I am no traitor! I do nothing but show the Jews where the Master may be; treachery means more than that."

The grouping of the first tableau, including some eighty figures, which precedes the fifth act, is in the highest style of dramatic art, and worthy of note is the extreme rapidity with which, after the curtain falls, a second tableau of the *Grapes from Canaan* is formed.

The Last Supper.

In the next scene, the *Last Supper*, the words are almost entirely from scripture; the account in St. Luke of the strife for precedence among the disciples being woven into the narrative of St. John. At the words, "I am among you as he that serveth," the Christus rises, and, laying aside his upper garment, girded with a towel, he addresses Peter in the well-known words. The rest of the dialogue exactly follows St. John's account, as also the words spoken when he has sat down. He rises for the institution of the eucharist, and says: "The old covenant, which my Father made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has reached its close. And I say unto you, a new covenant is beginning, which I solemnly consecrate to-day in my blood, as the Father hath delivered to me, and it will last till all shall be fulfilled." The actual words of consecration follow. Mayr's acting and movements throughout this scene, which demands so much, are simply perfect and inexpressibly solemn; there is a marvelous effect in the raising of the hands

and laying them upon the bread, as though Divinity were poured out in action. All that follows is admirable; the administration—the action and expression of Judas and the bearing of all the apostles. After this the Christus says: "My children, abide in me and I in you. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love."

After the prophecy of the betrayal by Judas and the denial of Peter, part of the discourse in St. John follows; the feeling and intonation with which Mayr delivered it being most beautiful and effective. He comes forward to the front of the stage, and raising his eyes to heaven, recites a hymn of thanksgiving; then, looking lovingly on his sorrowful companions, he says, in accents of solemn tenderness: "My children, why are ye so sad, and why do ye gaze on me so mournfully? Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions." And the solemn words are continued in tones of such affecting devoutness that we grieve when they are ended.

There is a certain relief to the strain of mind and feeling which the scenes involve in the tableaux and songs of the chorus, while yet the latter never fail to bring home to the conscience the lesson of what we behold. The sixth act begins with the tableau of Joseph sold by his brethren, while the chorus sings:

What will ye offer for the lad?
Answer us, brothers, if we now
For gold deliver him to you.

And then they remind us:

> How oft have ye, through evil deeds,
> Your God even thus betrayed and sold!

The contrast is tremendous between the scene which follows, Judas before the Sanhedrin, and the closing scene of the preceding act. For dramatic force it is one of the most striking in the play, and perhaps Lechner's acting is here at its best. The mixture of irresolution and determination, of lingering regrets and eagerness to grasp the reward just within his reach, is perfectly expressed. He cannot bear to be questioned as to the cause of his rupture with his Master, answers Caiaphas surlily, and after the fearful words, which are the sad story of many a soul, "The friendship between him and me has for some time become cooler," breaks out abruptly with the question, "What will ye give me if I deliver him unto you?"

It would be impossible for any mere reading of the narrative to bring the awful tragedy of such a choice before the mind as Lechner's acting does. The choice which each soul must make between the dust of earth and the treasures of eternity, is brought out also with great skill and terrible irony in the text. "Only think, Judas," Dathan says, "thirty pieces of silver! What a prize!" Then he is flattered, told that much more will be done for him, that he will become a man of mark and distinction, till the last wavering of the will is overcome, and he cries out, "I am content!" and then, aside, "My fortune is made!" This single mo-

ment of fearful contentment and elation is his; in the very next he cowers before the indignant outburst of reproach addressed to him by Nicodemus.

The eagerness with which he claws each piece of silver as it is reckoned to him, and drops it into his bag, has often been described. He was last seen at the table of his Lord—now he is taking counsel with his enemies, has come into their secret, and united himself to the assembly gathered together against the soul of the righteous. And with overpowering horror the words of the chorus ring in our ears:

> **A faithful picture of the world**
> **In this sad scene before us lies.**

Caiaphas.

When Judas has left the council Caiaphas becomes the chief actor; his iron will treads out any spark of opposition kindled by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, who leave the council after a vehement protest. Hitherto only bonds and imprisonment have been spoken of for the prophet; now Caiaphas, with splendid action, pronounces his decision: "Hearken to your high priest! It is better that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. He must die! No peace in Israel without his death!" "God has spoken through his high priest," a rabbi exclaims; "only through his death can the people of Israel be saved." The council breaks up without any solemn blessing from the high priest, but with a tumultuous outcry of "Let him die, the enemy of our holy law!" So ends

this wonderful scene, the counterpart of the intense calm of the one which preceded it, the closing words of which still echo in the heart: "But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given me commandment, even so I do."

A beautiful tableau introduces the seventh act: *Adam Tilling the Ground*, with his children around him, while Eve sits a little apart, a babe in her lap and a little one by her knee—eleven children in all. Here again the effect is rather marred by the contrast between the glaring tricot worn by Eve and the bare, round limbs of the children. There is a second tableau, in which twenty-four take part, of Joab treacherously slaying Amasa, which lasts for several minutes.

The Agony in the Garden.

The Agony in the Garden was one of the most difficult pieces of acting in Mayr's part; but he brought to it intense feeling, devotion and dignity. Never can the tone be forgotten in which he exclaims, as from the depth of a broken heart, "Father, my Father," or the touching tenderness of his complaint when he returns for the second time to the sleeping apostles: "O my most trusted ones! Even among you I find none to comfort me." The anguish becomes keener and more fearful in its expression: "The sorrows of death encompass me. . . . . O sin! O sins of mankind, ye weigh me down! O fearful burden! My Father! . . . . Thy most holy will! Father! Thy Son; hear him!" Then, as the Christus "reels in the victorious fight," an

angel appears. It were better, perhaps, if no words were spoken, and if the angel were only to support the head which leans on the arms of the messenger in mortal exhaustion. When he speaks once more, he has been strengthened. "Yea, holy Father! . . . I will accomplish it! Reconciliation, salvation, blessedness!"

There are moments like these during the play when the thought forces itself on one's mind: "These are the people to whom some among us would fain 'preach the Gospel.'" No one, and certainly not a peasant wood-carver, could have acted as Mayr does unless penetrated by the awful truths which he sets forth. And he is but the representative of that which has for hundreds of years flourished in his village, and which finds expression in the text of the passion play.

The taking of the Christus by the soldiers of the high priest ends the first part of the drama.

Annas.

After a brief interval the second part begins with a tableau containing thirty figures, of Zedekiah smiting Micaiah on the cheek, and then comes the scene of our Lord before Annas. The conception of the character of Annas is of one, more even than Caiaphas, filled with thirst for the blood of the Christ; though, from his age, with less power to carry his designs into action, yet suffering from the restless desire to see them accomplished.

He appears with his friends on the balcony of his house, saying that he cannot rest that night until he

knows that the disturber of peace is in bonds. The priests try to pacify him, telling him that the prisoner will soon be here. When the Christus is led in the Scripture narrative is followed, and the mournful procession from one tribunal to another begins. Mocked by the soldiers, he is led to Caiaphas, who holds his court in the middle of the stage. Two tableaux, the stoning of Naboth and the affliction of Job, precede this scene; and the chorus sung during the latter exhibition is striking and touching, with its continual refrain, "Alas! Behold the man!"

Here again, doubtless, to some minds old truths are brought home more deeply than they had ever been before. The chorus, the tableau and the following scenes are the setting forth visibly of the old words: "As for me, I am a worm and no man."

> "Alas! Behold the man!
> O all ye tender-hearted souls.
> Ah, Jesus, Jesus, Son of God,
> Becomes the scorn and jest of knaves,
> Amid his awful strife with pain.
> Alas! Behold the man!"

How, we can not but ask ourselves, have these peasant artists learned, both in action and in the long choruses which are interwoven with the scenes, to instruct those who have had every opportunity for instruction and reflection on the subject-matter of their drama, and to impress, as they never before were impressed, the very people who have meditated most deeply on the narrative of the passion?

The intense aggravation which must have been caused to the sufferings of one already exhausted in body and mind, by the repeated dragging about from tribunal to tribunal, is now probably brought home for the first time to the hearts of many by the action of the Passion play. The mockery of the guards, as they lead the Christus from one to another, does but fill in the scenes which we feel sure, from the narrative of the Gospels, must have taken place.

The Trial Before Caiaphas.

The *Trial Before Caiaphas* is chiefly an expansion of the scene described by St. Matthew in four words, "Many false witnesses came." One after another steps forward confronting the silent Redeemer, who stands motionless; the cord which binds his hands behind his back held by one of the mocking guard.

The Denial of Peter.

This is followed by the scene in the hall of the high priest, which is full of men and women. St. John comes to the door and asks leave to bring in Peter. The acting of Hett in the latter rôle is most striking and instructive, and he looks his part remarkably well. He stands facing the audience, over the fire which has been made in the middle of the hall, warming his hands, with an expression in which anxiety, grief and fear are mingled. The fear predominates as he hears the servants discussing the attack on Malchus by one of the

followers of Jesus, and agreeing that it will be a case of "ear for ear;" so that his answer to the first maid-servant seems almost the natural result of his condition. "I have been watching thee for a long time," she says. "If I do not mistake, thou art one of the disciples of the Galilean?" "I? No—I am not! Woman, I know him not, nor do I know even what thou sayest." He instantly tries to slip out of the hall, but comes against the maid who keeps the door. The difference between the frightened, hesitating manner of his first denial and his strong protestation later is strikingly brought out, especially when, the third time, he lifts his eyes and hands to heaven, and with vehement action swears by the living God, "I know not the man of whom ye speak." At this moment the Christus is led into the hall, and for a moment the Master and disciple are face to face; then Peter leaves the hall, and the curtain falls.

The scene which follows, of Peter bewailing his sin, is one of the most instructive and touching in the play; loving repentance could hardly be more deeply expressed both in word and action, nor the instant return of the soul to him whom it had left; horror of self only increasing trust in his forgiveness and mercy.

"O dearest Master! how deeply have I fallen! O weak, O wretched man! Thee, my most loving friend and teacher, I have denied—three times have I denied thee for whom I promised to die! Oh, I know not how I could so terribly have forgotten myself! Accursed be my shameful betrayal! May my heart be ever filled with sorrow for this despicable cowardice! Lord, my dearest Lord! if thou hast still grace left for me, grace

for a faithless one, oh grant it, grant it even to me. Even now hearken to the voice of my repentant heart. Alas! the sin has been committed; I can never more undo it, but ever, ever will I weep and repent over it; never, never more will I leave thee! O thou most full of goodness, thou wilt not cast me out? thou wilt not despise my bitter repentance? No; the gentle, compassionate glance with which thou didst look upon me, thy deeply fallen disciple, assures me that thou wilt forgive me. This hope I have in thee, O best of teachers. And the whole love of my heart shall from this moment belong to thee, and keep me most closely united to thee. Nothing shall be able ever again to separate me from thee!"

In the next scene the Christus is mocked by twenty-four soldiers of the high priest during the night so spent by him in preparation for the sufferings of the next day. He is blindfolded, smitten, pushed from his seat, so that he falls on the ground; but throughout he preserves dignity, meek endurance, and perfect silence.

Cain and Judas.

The tenth act opens with the tableau of *Cain,* in an attitude of despair, his hand pressed to his brow, standing over the slain body of Abel. Cain is clad in a leopard's skin, Abel in a sheepskin. Immediately after this tableau Judas appears, despair gnawing at his heart. "No hope! no escape!" he cries out in horror. "If the Master had willed to save himself, he would have made them feel his power a second time in the garden." He

rails at the accursed synagogue, at the traders, at himself, and rushes away declaring that he will have no part in the blood of the innocent. His remorse, face to face with his sin, is a fearful contrast to the repentance of Peter.

The Sanhedrin is assembled, and as Caiaphas is telling the council that he could not wait for morning to complete the condemnation of the enemy of the law, Judas bursts in, and the last terrible scene between him and his tempters takes place. It is but the drawing out of the Scripture account: "What is that to us! see thou to that." His despair is only treated with indifference, and his rage sternly rebuked. "Have ye condemned him?" he asks in agony. "He must die," is thundered in his ears by the whole assembly. "Woe! woe!" he shrieks forth; "I have sinned, I have betrayed the righteous. O ye bloodthirsty judges, ye condemn and destroy the innocent!" "Peace, Judas, or—" "No peace for me for evermore," he breaks out; "no peace for you! The blood of the innocent cries for vengeance." In vain he is admonished as to the respect due to the high priest and the council; despair raises him above them; and when reminded that he made his own bargain, has duly received his reward, and that if he behaves himself he may have something further, he cries out with intense horror: "I will have nothing more! I tear asunder the shameful compact: let the innocent go free. I demand his freedom—my hands shall be pure from his blood." Then, when sternly told, "Thy master must die, and thou hast delivered him to death," he shrieks out, "Die!—I am a traitor! May

ten thousand devils from hell tear me in pieces. Here, ye bloodhounds, take your accursed blood-money," and with terrible action and increasing rage and despair, he flings the bag of silver at the feet of Caiaphas. "Body and soul are lost, and ye—ye shall be dragged with me into the lowest abyss of hell."

There is a pause after he has rushed from the council; even Caiaphas seems for a moment appalled, and exclaims, "A fearful man!" but quickly collecting himself, says, "He has betrayed his friend; we pursue our enemy!"

Again the Christus is led in; and the gospel story in St. Luke is exactly represented. Annas asks him, "Art thou the Christ? tell us:" and the answer is given, "If I tell you, ye will not believe; and if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go." And when the last answer of truth is given, "Ye say that I am," the horrible cry again breaks forth: "He must die!" and three members of the council are sent to Pilate to ask him to pass judgment before the feast.

The act closes with the final despair of Judas—a wonderful and fearful scene, the acting of which would alone, it has been said by critics, give Lechner a high place among the actors of Europe. His monologue, written by Daisenberger, is in sharpest contrast to that of Peter. Both see the full horror of their sin: but one sees it in the light of his master's countenance, healing while it wounded; the other in the hopeless blackness which he had voluntarily chosen. "I am cast away," he cries, "hated and abhorred by all, by all, even by those who led me astray; I wander alone with this in-

ward devouring fire. Oh, if I dared but once more to see his face; I might yet cling to him, the only anchor of salvation! But he is in prison—is perhaps already put to death; no hope, no hope for me! He is dead, and I am his murderer! Cursed be the hour when my mother brought me forth! Here, accursed life, will I end thee! let the most miserable of all fruit hang on this tree." The curtain falls as he tears off his girdle.

Christ Before Pilate.

The eleventh act of *Christ before Pilate* is prefaced by the tableau of *Daniel accused before Darius.* It is a grand scene: on the left of the balcony of Pilate's house is the assembly of the scribes and priests; on the right the Christus amid his guards, and on the balcony the noble figure of Pilate in his magnificent dress surrounded by his court. Before he appears, Caiaphas again stirs up and exhorts the council, reminds them that the whole peace of their country depends on this moment, charges them to be firm in their resolve, and not to rest till their enemy is put to death. It is wonderful how he overcomes the difficulty of addressing and haranguing Pilate from below, and how the stronger will seems to reverse their positions and make Caiaphas the dominating figure. He pays a brief and haughty homage to the viceroy of Cæsar when he appears, and instantly proceeds to demand judgment on the accused.

The Scripture narrative is followed, but with additions. On Pilate's first declaration that he cannot con-

demn a man without knowing whether he is guilty, a rabbi informs him that the whole council have given judgment against him, and that it is therefore hardly worth his while to inquire into the case. "What!" he replies, "ye dare to propose to me, the representative of Cæsar, to become a blind tool for carrying out your resolutions. That be far from me! I must know what law he has broken, and in what manner."

The long struggle between Caiaphas and Pilate then begins, the latter clearly seeing through the malice of the accusers. When Caiaphas asks if the title of "King of Israel" is not rebellion against Cæsar, Pilate replies with derision: "I marvel at your suddenly aroused zeal for the honor of Cæsar." When he commands that Christ be brought into his house, that he may question him alone, a rabbi says: "That is a dangerous delay." But Caiaphas answers, "Do not lose courage! Victory belongs to the steadfast!"

The first and second conversations with Pilate, given in St. John's gospel, before and after the scourging, are in the play given in one, beginning with the second. "Whence art thou?" Pilate asks; and receiving no answer, continues, "Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" Then at length the Christus speaks: "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." "A bold speech," Pilate says aside; then, to the Christus, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" The rest of the conversation exactly follows St. John.

The famous words, "What is truth?" are uttered with a dreamy, inward expression and tone, as though outward circumstances had for an instant vanished from his mind, and he were alone with his own soul and with the flood of thought raised by the words of Christ. To the message of his wife, which is now brought to him, he replies that she may be without anxiety, as he does not intend to give way to the Jews, and takes counsel with his courtiers, who declare their belief that envy alone is the cause of the accusations against Christ. When the crowd of priests return beneath his balcony, he says decidedly, "He is guiltless;" but yet continues to parley with them, condescends to excuse himself for not yielding, and at length catches eagerly at the mention of Galilee to send the accused to Herod.

Christ Before Herod.

An admirable tableau of *Samson Destroying his Enemies by his Death* preceded the twelfth act. The unconcern of a group to the left is especially striking, continuing a game while the pillars are even then giving way. The scene of Christ before Herod is somewhat lengthy, but this is only through the faithfulness of the Ammergauers to the gospel history. Herod questions him "in many words," while Caiaphas and the chief priests, following their victim, who is now guarded by Roman soldiers, to this new tribunal, "vehemently accuse him." They are terribly in earnest, but fail to persuade the pleasure-loving Herod to take the matter seriously; he positively refuses to give any judgment

except that the Christ is a simple man, not clever enough for the crimes laid against him.

There are two tableaux before the thirteenth act—the *Bloody Coat of Joseph Shown to his Father*, while the chorus sing:—

"Even thus is Jesu's body torn,"

and *Isaac upon the Altar of Sacrifice.* In the first scene the struggle between Pilate and Caiaphas begins again, as the latter stands beneath the balcony at the head of the council; the Christus on the other side. Pilate proposes to scourge him, "in order," he says, "to meet your wishes," and release him. But Caiaphas declares that the law requires that he should be put to death. Pilate then stakes all upon one venture, evidently with no doubt of its success. He has heard of the triumphant entry into Jerusalem, and it is clear that he regards the Christus as a popular idol, knowing that the priests "for envy had delivered him."

To the people therefore he determines to appeal, pledging himself to abide by their decision. The part of Pilate could not have been written without fine appreciation of his character and motives, and it forms a most suggestive commentary on the text of the gospels.

"Ye force me to tell you openly what I think," he says. "Moved by ignoble passion, ye persecute this man, because the people are better disposed toward him than toward you. I have listened long enough to your envious complaints; I will now hear the voice of the people." He then says that he expects the people to assemble in order to demand, according to custom, the

release of a prisoner, and promises to allow their choice between Jesus and Barabbas to be final. "It will then be shown," he says confidently, "whether your complaints are the expression of the mind of the people, or only of your own rage." Caiaphas, no less confident in his power over the fickle mob, bows, and replies haughtily, "It will then be seen, O governor, that thou hast wrongly thought evil of us;" while the whole council cry out, "Release unto us Barabbas, and crucify this man." But Pilate answers firmly, "Ye are not the people. The people will decide. Meanwhile I will cause him to be scourged."

The Appeal to the People.

The action and words of Caiaphas, after Pilate has retired, are appalling in their bitter determination to pursue his victim to the death. "Pilate has appealed to the people," he says; "well, we will also appeal to them." He bids the priests to disperse themselves through the whole of Jerusalem, and to "move the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them." Every obstacle only feeds the flame of his fiery zeal; what is indicated by a few words in St. Mark is represented in most impressive action. "Let us not lose a moment," he exclaims; "let us go and meet the crowd, to excite and inflame them. Try to kindle in them the most glowing hatred against the enemy of Moses. Seek to win the wavering through the power of your words and promises. Terrify the followers of the Galilean by scorn and reproach, by threats, and if necessary by ill-

usage, so that not one may dare to come here, much less to open his mouth."

The traders take an active part in carrying out these commands; we are never allowed to lose sight of the working of their revenge amongst the causes of the condemnation of Christ.

The Crowning with Thorns.

The scene of the *Scourging and Crowning with Thorns* concludes this act. A gorgeous tableau, *Joseph made Ruler over Egypt*, introduces the fourteenth act; and a second tableau, of the *Two Goats as Sin-offerings* was also among the most striking.

The words of the chorus become more and more touching, and are full of instruction. We have just beheld the king of Israel, with the crown wherewith the Jewish nation crowned him; while in mournful accents the chorus sang:—

> How shall his godhead now appear?
> Alas! behold the man!
> A worm, the scorn of soldiers now.

But as the curtain rises and discloses the triumph of Joseph, the strain is changed to one of joy:—

> Behold the man!
> See Joseph called to high estate;
> Behold the man!
> The type, in pain and joy, of Christ.

During the tableau of the goat slain as a sin-offering,

they sing of the new offering required for the pardon of sin:—

A Lamb, from every blemish pure;

and then suddenly break off their song, and for the first time actually take part in the drama; the choragus exclaiming, while fierce cries are heard in the distance, ever swelling in volume and growing nearer and still more near:—

The murderer's fearful cry I hear.

The unseen multitude thunder forth:—

"Barabbas be our choice to-day."

But the chorus sings in unison,

No, Jesus be from fetters free,

Though still unseen, it is evident that the crowd has grown in size and in ferocity, as appears from the intonation of the choragus,

Ah! fiercer sounds the murderous cry,

"Crucify him! crucify him!" is heard louder and nearer, as the crowd press on, though still out of view. In vain the chorus plead:—

Jerusalem! Jerusalem!
God will avenge the blood of his Son!

The multitude respond, in tones of anger and determination:

His blood be on us, and on our children,

and the choragus solemnly intones,

Be it then upon you and upon your children.

Christ Rejected.

The curtain rises. Again the surging crowd pour forth from the streets of Jerusalem, animated by one passionate sentiment. They are in four bands, led respectively by Annas, Caiaphas and two of the chief priests, Nathaniel and Ezechiel, and gather into one dense crowd beneath Pilate's balcony, acting and speaking as one man. "He has blasphemed God!" "To death with the false prophet!" "Crucify him!" "Release unto us Barabbas!" "The Nazarene must die!"—such is the burden of "their rude, lawless cry," until Pilate appears on the balcony with the Christus, "wearing the purple robe and crown of thorns," and there is a moment's pause as he pronounces the words, "Behold the Man!"

Pilate is still confident in the success of his appeal to the people, and when the cry of "Crucify him!" is still raised, orders Barabbas to be brought forth, and the Christus to be placed beside him. Then, as the two stand side by side beneath his balcony, and the crowd exclaim, "Let the Nazarene die!" he cannot contain his disappointment and astonishment. "I do not comprehend this people; a few days ago they followed this man, rejoicing and applauding him, through the streets of Jerusalem. Is it possible that the same should now demand his death and destruction?"

Caiaphas replies that the eyes of the people have

been opened, and a shout is raised, "Let him die! The false Messiah, the deceiver!"

One last effort is made by Pilate. Pointing to the two prisoners, respectively, he bids the people consider and choose—choose between the noble, gentle figure of him whom they have long honored as a wise teacher and who now, though without fault, bears the marks of cruel chastisement, and the frightful figure of the robber and murderer. "I appeal to your good sense, to your feeling as men. Choose! Whom will ye that I release unto you, Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?"

Then the last fearful cry is raised: "Away with this man, and deliver unto us Barabbas!" And Caiaphas eagerly reminds Pilate of his promise. "I am accustomed to keep my word without needing a reminder," he answers; yet still struggles against the will which is overpowering his sense of justice. But his plea, "Shall I crucify your king?" only leads to the arguments and threats to which he at last succumbs. He cannot face the fear of Cæsar's displeasure.

The Judgment.

The most august trial in the world's history is here represented before us; and yet we are not disappointed at the result, but held spell-bound by awe and overpowering interest. We know what the bitter end will be, and yet can scarce believe that it will come. Can this noble and clear-sighted Roman judge yield indeed to the clamor of the mob? Will he endure the threat,

"We will not leave the place until judgment is given?" Can even the mob choose Barabbas?

Yes, Barabbas is set free and led away; formal judgment is pronounced and written down by Pilate's secretary, and then, having washed his hands, declaring to the last the innocence of his prisoner, he commands the two thieves to be brought forth. They stand beside the noble figure of the Christus, and the sentence is read. Then Pilate says, "Now take ye him, and"—he pauses, as though unable to speak the words, but at length they seem forced from him, and breaking his staff of office in two, he exclaims, in a tone of anger and despair—"crucify him!" He, too, has made the great choice, and turning hastily, almost rushes from the judgment-seat.

"To Golgotha!" is shouted, and a tumultuous procession is formed—one alone moving calmly and peacefully, though in bonds, and amid every mark of deepest indignity.

The Way of the Cross.

The Passion-Play began with the "Entrance," and now we have come to the "Way of the Cross." It is introduced by three tableaux: *Isaac Bearing the Wood to Mount Moriah*, the *Children of Israel Bitten by Fiery Serpents*, and the *Brazen Serpent*. Both of these latter are admirable in conception, in grouping and in coloring. There is a multitude of figures, numbers of them being children, and yet less than a minute elapses from the moment that the curtain falls on the first until it rises on the second. Moses is, of course, the central

figure in the last tableau, and he is admirably represented.

The first lines, sung by the chorus before these tableaux, are among the most solemn and impressive both in words and music, although the latter is very simple:

> **Pray and render heartfelt thanks!**
> **He who drank the bitter cup**
> **Follows now the paths of death,**
> **Reconciling man to God.**

The procession advances slowly from the right, met by the group from Bethany from the left, and by Simon of Cyrene and the women of Jerusalem in the middle stage. Far more impressive and noble than in the hour of triumph is the figure bending beneath the cross, each step evidently a struggle with mortal weakness, and yet moving "calm as the march of some majestic cloud" amidst the brutality and jeers of the crowd. He falls beneath the cross, but it is with unruffled anguish; he tries even in falling to support the burden laid upon him; we feel that the worn body is doing its utmost to obey the cruel behests of his tormentors.

The Christus has spoken no word since he said to Pilate, "Every one that is of the truth heareth my words," but now, as Simon of Cyrene willingly assumes the burden of the cross, he opens his mouth in benediction. "The blessing of God be on thee and thine," he says, in a voice faint with exhaustion and

anguish, and moves slowly on to meet the women of Jerusalem, Veronica and the Maries, with St. John. The latter follow on the way of the cross, as the procession passes out of sight.

The Crucifixion.

There is a pause after the curtain has fallen, and the painful strain is almost more than we can bear, as the chorus, clad now in black, file slowly in, and while the sound of blows with a hammer are heard behind the scenes, mournfully chant:

> Come, pious souls, draw near the Lamb,
> Who freely gives himself for you.
> Behold him on the tree of doom,
> Between two murderers he hangs;
> He, Son of God, his life-blood gives,—
> And ye no tears give back to him!

When the curtain rises, the two thieves are already fastened to their crosses, which are upright; but in the centre a prostrate form lies nailed to a cross, which has not yet been raised. There is a delay, while a messenger from Pilate brings in the handwriting which is to proclaim the sufferer a king even upon this cruel throne; then the cross is slowly raised.

It may be that the very excellence of representations of the crucifix to which we are accustomed, both in sculpture and painting, makes this living picture less striking than are other parts of the play. The effect is also diminished by the flesh-colored garment which

entirely covers the body, and beneath which it is evidently tightly laced in some sort of stays. For there is no expansion of the chest or of the muscles, such as would naturally be caused by the position, and which we see represented in even the rudest crucifix. The chest is quite flat, and gives the impression, when seen very near, of being tightly bound to the cross, as it doubtless is, by the stays which confine the body. The feet are covered by the tricot, the edges of which are clearly seen at the neck and wrists, which are uncovered; and there is a great contrast between its color and that of the skin, especially as the hands soon become almost purple from the binding of the wrists. All these, especially the clothed feet, impair the impression as we gaze on the motionless form so familiar to us in sculpture.

But all is changed when the head, which had hung slightly to the right, is slowly lifted, the eyes raised to heaven, and the first words uttered. At this single movement and expression of countenance all is forgotten except the head and features, and the words spoken. The whole of the scene recorded in Scripture is acted around the cross; the mockery; the soldiers parting the raiment; the attempt of Caiaphas to induce Pilate to remove the superscription; the conversion of the centurion. But now we can see nothing but the thorn-crowned head, and watch for the words which fall at intervals from the sufferer's lips. Nothing could be more perfect than the weary, agonized, but tender movement of the head as he turns it from Mary to St. John. Each utterance marks a stage of suffering and

desolation, and the time seems rather hours than minutes, until the eyes, full of anguish and of love, are for the last time raised to Heaven and the last words spoken.

> Love masters agony: the soul that seemed
> Forsaken feels her present God again:
> And in her Father's arms
> Contented dies away.

"And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned." This instantaneous change of feeling in the crowd, which had been worked up by the chief priests, is acted so as to make us realize it as we had never done before. Only Caiaphas remains firm and unchanged. Even the tidings brought hastily to him of the rent veil of the Temple fail to move him, though the other priests are evidently disturbed by some misgivings. His resentment against him whom he has destroyed only becomes keener, and he exclaims, pointing fiercely to the cross, "He has brought this to pass by his wicked enchantments."

At some distance the effect of the pierced hands is perfectly given, but from very near the stage it is easy to perceive that the nails passed between his fingers and were then bent so that the very large nail-heads covered the centre of the palm, while the third and little fingers were closed so as to conceal the crooked part of the nail. A broad band passes over each wrist under the tricot, and is then fastened to the cross; there are many marks of nails clearly visible, after the

taking down from the cross, at the spot where the wrists would come, besides the larger marks, nearer the end, of the nails of the hands.

Caiaphas and the chief priests, who had left the scene on the news of the rending of the veil, return with persistent hatred to avenge, as he says, "the destruction wrought in the Temple," on the lifeless body of the Christ. But the limit of his power has been reached, and the victory of death begins. In vain he curses Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, forbidding them ever again to appear in the council. They are strong in the authority of the Roman governor, and, renouncing their allegiance to the Sanhedrin, boldly guard the sacred body.

The Descent from the Cross.

For scenic effect the taking down from the cross is, perhaps, the most beautiful in the play, both in grouping and action, with tenderness expressed in every movement and incident. The chief actors are both on ladders and in positions which might easily become grotesque. They have also to accomplish not only what is seen—the extracting of the nails and lifting down of the body—but the unfastening of the unseen bandages. Yet all is so done as to make the whole scene one of exquisite beauty. Nothing can be more tenderly reverent than the laying down of the body on Mary's knees, or the slow, mournful procession to the grave.

Here, it might be expected, the Passion-Play would end; but the few scenes which follow seem to be neces-

sary, both to complete the play and to lighten the feeling of profound sadness which has so long oppressed the audience. Without the resurrection the drama would be incomplete. When the chorus once more appears, in many-colored robes, we feel that joy and hope are at hand. They sing:

"Love, O Love, in thy dear blood,
Thou didst strive with God's own might."

* * * * *

Softly rest, O Sacred Frame,
In the stillness of the grave;
All thy bitter passion o'er!
In earth's lap, O softly rest
Till thy glory be revealed.
Never shall corruption's worm
Touch or mar thy holy flesh.

The Resurrection.

The scenes of the guarded grave, the resurrection, the women at the sepulchre, and even of the meeting of the Magdalene with her risen Master, are less striking; but when, after the Christus has left Mary, she exclaims, "Halleluiah! He is risen," and the cry is echoed on all sides, as the chorus enters for the last time; the hearts of the audience respond to the song of joy and triumph chanted during the closing tableau which has taken the place of the scene of the ascension. This last is not now attempted, but the Christus is seen for the last time standing on a mount, in white and glistening raiment, holding in his hand the resurrection banner. His enemies are made his footstool

and cower beneath his feet, while around him are grouped his friends and many of the typical figures from the Old Testament tableaux. Even as we look, a ray of brilliant sunshine suddenly illumes his countenance and figure, and so we see him for the last time, while the hallelujahs of the chorus peal forth:

The Hero hath conquered
The might of the foe!
Few hours in the grave,
In the gloom hath he slept.
Sing before him holy Psalms!
Strew before him Conquerors' palms.
The Lord he hath risen!
Break forth, O ye heavens,
Earth, sing to the Victor,
To him who hath risen!
Hallelujah!

Even more touching than the greeting of the chorus is their farewell: "Let us behold, ere we part, the triumphant festival of victory. Now, in majesty and great glory, he enters the new Jerusalem, where he will gather to himself all whom he hath purchased with his blood. Strengthened and full of joy at this sight, return to your homes, O friends, filled with tenderest love for him who loved you even unto death, and still loves you eternally in heaven; there, where the song of victory ever resounds, Praise be to the Lamb who was slain! There, reunited around our Saviour, we shall all meet again. Hallelujah!"

In this little village of Ober-Ammergau, in the Bavarian highlands, is the last home of the mediæval

Religious drama, and here it is still acted in its integrity, with all the splendor and more of the reverence of ancient days. For many generations these peasants have not only steadily and patiently performed their vow, but have brought to the performance that earnest purpose of doing their best, through which all true art has been matured. The Passion-play and its traditions have been the very life of the village; each child born there hears of it, and prepares for his part in it from infancy, while to personate the Christus or the Virgin is the highest distinction to which any youth or maiden dreams of attaining.

And thus Lady Burton, a devout but liberal Catholic, who has given us in book form her impressions of the play as she saw it in August, 1880: "I had that presanctified divine service feeling after the play, the same as if I had just left our mass on Good Friday. It was all the offices of the holy week in one. Or I felt as if I had just come out of a 'spiritual retreat.' It helps out marvellously in holy meditation, above all on communion days. I have now no difficulty in following Christ in my thoughts. I have seen the Man-God as he was during his sojourn on earth. Before I had imagined it; now I know it."

Such is the picture which is being engraved on the minds and hearts of perhaps two hundred and sixty thousand people in one summer. In the Old Testament splendid, holy school, and great would be representing sibility of those who should attempt to the entrance Familiarity cannot breed contempt, as it is performed only once in ten years, and most persons only see it once

in a lifetime. Not only are the actors shut out from the world, but not for anything would they carry their play elsewhere.

The actors esteem it as the highest honor to take some part, however lowly, in the great play. The corrupting influences of gold and publicity have thus far left them almost untouched, though as seven hundred persons appeared on the stage at the last representation, in 1900, to which people flocked by thousands from all parts of Europe and the United States, it is not to be supposed that the performers and the townsfolk were altogether uncontaminated by the evils that follow in the train of fashion.

The Selzach Passion-Play.

Within the last few years the progressive Swiss people have created a Passion-play, whose main purpose seems to be dramatic effect, rather than the promotion of religious sentiment. The village of Selzach in northwest Switzerland has long been celebrated for the dramatic ability of its inhabitants, though until recent years there has been little opportunity for its development. In 1890 a party of enthusiastic citizens returned from Ober-Ammergau, after witnessing what they declared to be the grandest and most powerful dr[illegible] ever seen, and with the characteristic [illegible]ple—"what others can do, we can do" [illegible] to produce a Swiss Passion-play.

[illegible]ties that met them were many and hard to ov[illegible] but with the appearance in 1892 of Müller's *Passion Oratorio* the last serious obstacle—the

lack of suitable music—vanished. In 1893 the first performance of the Selzach Passion-play was given and achieved an immediate success, each subsequent revival being attended with increased popularity.

The plan of the play may briefly be said to be Müller's oratorio illustrated with tableaux representing the principal events in the passion of our Lord. That these were modeled on the previous representations at Ober-Ammergau cannot be disputed; but there was also originality, both in the conception of the performance and the manner in which it was carried out. The originators were men primarily interested in the drama, and the nucleus of their co-workers was supplied by the local dramatic and musical clubs.

Regarding the drama from a critical standpoint, it must be admitted that a much stronger representation might be given on almost the same lines. The first part of the performance, which represents typical scenes of the Old Testament, might, from a dramatic point of view, be advantageously omitted. Later, also, one or two tableaux of doubtful significance might be erased with profit. But judged as a whole, the play is of its kind one of the most intensely absorbing representations ever witnessed on the stage.

The performance is divided into two main parts, one being given in the morning and the other in the afternoon. The morning section contains the Old Testament scenes and twelve preparatory tableaux, representing the life of our Lord from his birth down to the entrance into Jerusalem. The afternoon division comprises the main play, the *Passion* proper, beginning with the de-

signs of the high priests and ending with the ascension. The music for the morning portion was written or arranged by the musical director of the Selzach singing society, and it is not until the actual passion begins in the afternoon that the Müller oratorio commences.

While not ranking with the creations of the great masters, it would be hard to imagine a composition better adapted to the needs of the play than this Swiss oratorio. It lends itself very readily to illustration by tableaux; it seems to express remarkably well the feeling of the scriptural scenes, to catch the biblical atmosphere, and while at times inspiringly dramatic and always deeply expressive, it never fails to retain a distinctly religious character. As to the performance itself, considering the rough material at the disposal of the management, the results both in the acted scenes and the numerous tableaux are little short of marvelous. In the acting, while at times we feel that it might have been more effective, yet by keeping the artists well within their limitations, anything like a fiasco has certainly been avoided. In the tableaux the pictures are well conceived and the figures in general well posed. If we single out any one figure we at once notice a greater or less degree of stiffness; but looking at the pictures as a whole this seems to disappear.

Starting with the plots of the high priests we work slowly along until we reach the first climax in the betrayal and arrest of Jesus. Then come the various accusations and trials before Pilate and the final yielding of that leader, dominated by his idolatry to power, as expressed in the person of "the Cæsar." Following

these are the scourging, the crowning with thorns, and the road to Golgotha, each scene showing an increase in intensity over its predecessors and all leading up to the great final tragedy of the crucifixion.

By the time this point is reached there are few among the audience who are not deeply moved by the great human tragedy being enacted before them. In some respects it may be unpleasant; for it is terrible and heart-rending in its awfulness, but it is none the less impressive and dramatic.

From the commencement of the designs of the high council we see the fated cloud of the Passion slowly but surely gathering around and above the central figure toward whom all our sympathies are strongly drawn. When the arrest comes, we feel that the breaking of the cloud is near; but the trials before Pilate bid us hope—although against hope—and thus keep up the suspense. When the delivery by Pilate to the Jews is made, giving up hope, our inclination is to flee; but some strange influence keeps us seated throughout the preparatory tortures and the touching parting with the Virgin. As the crucifixion is slowly consummated, the desire to escape, with its accompanying inability, increases, until the strain would be unbearable were it not for the sudden change in the music which breathes of brightness to come, and keeps us up through the painful descent from the cross and placing in the sepulchre.

The nearer the Resurrection comes, the brighter and more hopeful grows the music, and when it actually bursts upon us, the tableau seems entirely inadequate.

But that matters little; the halleluia music is swelling forth; the fearful tragedy is over; our hearts are freed from the burden of past sorrow; we are carried away by the spirit of the moment beyond criticisms of faulty stage mechanism. The same remark applies to the Ascension. A village stage fails utterly to manage such a scene in any satisfactory way; but we hardly notice it. The charm of the resurrection and ascension of the down-trodden hero of mankind is upon us, and we are only too glad to yield ourselves and our imagination to it.

VII.

The Italian Renaissance.

It was toward the close of the fourteenth century that the new light of the Renaissance first arose in Italy and beamed in brilliant splendor from the intellectual summits of the time. The mist through which the middle ages had looked on classical antiquity was beginning now to clear away, and to the anxious, searching eye appeared an unexpected fullness of the richest life in ever-widening circumstance, while that which was already known, now being seen in clearer outlines, took possession of mind and heart with irresistible might. The powerful movement of that epoch, which prepared a regeneration of thought and culture for mankind in Europe, is connected mainly with three great names—Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio.

Dante.

The relation of these three men to antiquity is as different as their character and genius. Dante's immense originality and productive energy, united to a will immovable and conscious of its aim, fixed the

assimilative powers of his mind within very definite bounds. And besides, he was only acquainted with classical antiquity through the narrow circle of Latin works current in the middle ages. He was, therefore, only able to appropriate from the ancients what corresponded with his own ideas of the world, or what was suited to advance his poetical or practical aims. But with the depth and breadth of his genius, and with the greatness of his character, this little, indeed, implies much; and though he has not extended our theoretical knowledge of antiquity, though he cannot be numbered among the creators of classical philology, he was, on the other hand, the founder of a new poetry inspired by the spirit of antiquity. As the father and master of Italian poetry, the creator of the *Divine Comedy* was not merely indebted to the Roman poets for maxims of worldly wisdom, mythological figures and poetic passages and motives; he was also indebted to the works of the ancients for his just perception of form and for his high aim. From them he learned the secret of putting deep subjects into classical form. In the first canto of the *Inferno* he says to the shade of Virgil: "Thou art my master and my author; from thee alone I derived the style which has done me honor."

The melody of Dante's verse, the force and pregnancy in the mighty rush of his diction, the rigorous choice of expression and of the position of every word, the art of placing with a few touches, sometimes with a single stroke, a plastic image before the mind—all these qualities show us the pupil of the ancients; a pupil, indeed, who in power of imagination and depth

of meaning far excels the Latin masters. But it was in their school that he conceived the idea of what a work of art should really be; it was from them he gained that higher view of the poet's mission as it is laid down in the Roman word *Vates*. And not only as artist, but also as a man and thinker, did Dante feel the vast significance of the antique conceptions. The idea of the old Roman manly virtue, the *virtus*, forms a living power in his soul. The antique conception of the state as the father of its citizens was seized by him in all its greatness as by no other in his age. Since, therefore, everything was worked out in his mind into harmony and into the closest connection with a great and minutely elaborated system of mediæval Christian ideas, we find a result that stands alone of its kind and can scarcely be expressed in words. Standing in the centre of mediæval culture, and one of the most zealous defenders of authority in church and state, Dante is at the same time the first great representative of individualism, which has hardly ever found a haughtier expression than in his words. By the great divine work of his life Dante gave the crowning termination and the finished expression to mediæval ideas, and at the same time founded the poetry of modern times.

Petrarch.

Petrarch's importance in the history of culture can be, perhaps, most vividly realized by a comparison. Petrarch was the Voltaire of the fourteenth century, the prophet of human learning, as Voltaire was of

human emancipation and enlightenment. The similarity in the exterior and interior lives of the two men is much greater than may appear at a superficial glance. Both stand in the centre of the intellectual movement of their age, and in close connection with their most prominent contemporaries and with crowned heads. Both received in their lifetime the highest recognition, or rather should we say, the highest adoration, as the dearest goal of their ambition, the laurel crown. In both we admire the manysidedeness of their talents, their extraordinary powers of assimilation, their restless activity of mind. Both show a sensibility and vanity developed to the same degree, and both possessed equally the gift of genius. If we are astonished at Voltaire's gigantic intellect, by which he is able to deduce the practical side from the most difficult problems, and the spirit by which he gives the most simple and striking form to his thoughts; we are, on the other hand, astonished at Petrarch's sympathetic intuition, which enabled him, from absolutely inadequate models and materials, to bring to recognition a buried world in all its vast importance to human culture. Both Petrarch and Voltaire were filled with enthusiasm for their mission, and dominated by the desire of making proselytes. Both knew how to strike various tones in their writings; Petrarch, however, generally speaks as a poet and a prophet, Voltaire as a philosopher and a man of the world. In both a theatrical trait can be perceived—in Petrarch, indeed, more than in Voltaire, because the ideality of his aims and the high demands he made on the spiritual and moral perfection of man

formed the most glaring contrast to the weakness of his own character. His diaries and letters reveal the strange union of a remarkable self-knowledge with a continued deception of himself and of others.

Petrarch was the first who threw himself with complete abandon into the ancient classic world of thought and form, and who pressed forward to a clear understanding of antiquity, as far as the inadequate and almost solely Roman materials at his hand enabled him to do so. He was the first who undertook in real earnest, who had both the will and the power to revive antiquity, not only for himself, but for his contemporaries and for posterity. In him the finest feeling and the most unbounded enthusiasm for the beautiful creations of antiquity, and for the importance of the ideas contained in them, were united to an unprejudiced scientific perception and the gift of a rare and vigorous diction. An opponent of astrology and other mediæval superstitions, an enemy of scholasticism and a warm admirer of Plato, a zealous collector and exponent of Latin manuscripts and other ancient relics, an elegant writer of Latin poetry and prose, he originated both the intellectual worship of the ancient world and the learned science of philology.

As an Italian lyrist, Petrarch succeeded to the inheritance of the Provencal troubadours and of the Florentine school—culminating in Dante—however much he emphasized his independence. But numerous motives in his poems, frequently also his expressed sentiments and ways of thinking, and, above all, the style he employs, reveal the pupil of the ancients.

Petrarch's lyrics are less spontaneous, and on the whole less deep than Dante's poetry of the same kind; they are also less abstract and in their manner of expression less hard to understand, but they are always grand in their wealth of thought, as in their perfection of form; they present an artistic work of the highest kind, to which succeeding generations have looked up with admiration, and which became a model for the following lyrists, not only of Italy, but, in the heyday of the Renaissance, of almost all the civilized nations of western Europe.

Boccaccio.

Boccaccio, the third of the "great Etruscan three," was of a very different nature. He was altogether a child of this world, endowed with a gay and sensual disposition, with a great eagerness for knowledge and with an insatiable desire and capacity for story-telling, in character an all-around and amiable personality. Stimulated as a student of classical antiquity by Petrarch, and as a poet by the influence of Dante, he possessed neither the intuitive historic glance of the former, nor the immense depth and poetic force of the latter. But notwithstanding his admiration for his two great predecessors, he managed to maintain his independence sufficiently to be able, in many essential points, to follow out his own inventive course, and with his unwearied diligence and astonishing fertility he attained two great results in poetry and learning.

His historical and mythological writings in the Latin tongue, especially his fifteen books, *De Gene-*

alogiis Deorum Gentilium, were followed up by a period of the most diligent collecting of philological works. In his Italian epics he attempted, with little success, to imitate the style and tone of ancient poetry by using classical subjects. On the other hand, he succeeded in depicting with great truthfulness nicely conceived psychological conditions and in carrying the reader along with him by his vivid portrayal of the passions. He also created for the growing epic poetry of his country some important elements for its poetical technology; in particular, he gained for it the strophe, the ottava rima, which is best suited to its movement, and which in the hands of Ariosto became such an excellent vehicle for a rich and brilliant fancy. Boccaccio himself by no means sounded all the secrets of the octave, for indeed, his verses, as a rule, are only mediocre. Rhythm is for him a robe in which he moves with ease, but not with any special grace, while Dante is as much at home in it as in his skin. Boccaccio, therefore, owes the greater part of his fame to Italian prose, which, in spite of many Latinisms and a too artificial construction of his periods, is full of color, life, energy and grace, and, in its excellencies as in its defects, is the purest exponent of the intellectual character of this clever and imaginative poet.

In prose form, which he disfigured, indeed, at first by too great a profusion of images, he then created the Italian romance as well as the biographical essay, and gave a new significance to the cyclical form of tale-writing—in his *Aminto* by the idyllic framework and the interspersed eclogues, in his *Decamerone* by the

poetic inventions employed and the highly developed art of its narration and characterization.

Study of Classical Antiquity.

The literary influence which finally transformed the growths of the Religious drama into the national dramas of Europe, was in a word the influence of the Renaissance. Among the remains of classical antiquity which were studied, translated and imitated, those of the drama necessarily held a prominent place. Never altogether lost sight of, they now became subjects of devoted research and models for careful imitation, first in their own, then in modern, tongues; and these essentially literary endeavors came more and more into contact with, and gradually acquired more control over, the already existing entertainments of the stage. Thus the stream of the modern drama, whose source and contributories have been described, was brought back into the ancient bed, from which its flow diverged into a number of national courses, unequal in impetus and strength, and varying in accordance with the manifold conditions of their progress.

Inferiority of Italian Drama.

The priority in this, as in other aspects of the Renaissance, belongs to Italy. In ultimate achievement, the Italian drama fell short of the results obtained elsewhere, notwithstanding that the Italian language had the advantage of closest relationship to the

Latin, and that the genius of the Italian people has at all times shown a predilection for the drama. The cause may be due, in a measure, to the absence from Italian national life, during a long period, and especially during the rise and earlier promise of Italian dramatic literature, of those lofty and potent impulses of popular feeling to which a national drama owes so much of its strength. This absence was due partly to the peculiarities of the Italian character, partly to the political and ecclesiastical experiences Italy was fated to undergo. The Italians were strangers to the enthusiasm of patriotism, which was as the breath in the nostrils to the English in the Elizabethan age, as well as to the single-minded religious fervor which identified Spain with the spirit of the Catholic revival. The clear-sightedness of the Italians had something to do with this, for they were too intelligent to believe in tyrants, and too free from illusions to deliver up their minds to the priests. The chilling and enervating effects of foreign domination, such as no Western people with a history and a civilization like those of Italy has ever experienced, did the rest, and for many generations rendered impotent the higher efforts of dramatic art. No basis was permanently found for a really national tragedy; while comedy, after turning from the direct imitation of Latin models to a more popular form, lost itself in an abandoned immorality of tone and in reckless insolence of invective against particular classes of society. Though its productive period long continued, the poetic drama more and more concentrated its efforts upon subordinate or subsidiary species, artificial in origin and

decorative in purpose, and surrendered its substance to the overpowering aids of music, dancing, and spectacle. Only a single form of the Italian drama, the improvised comedy, remained truly national; and this was of its nature dissociated from higher literary effort. The revival of Italian tragedy in later times is due partly to the imitation of French models, partly to the endeavor of a brilliant genius to infuse into his art the historical and political spirit. Comedy likewise attained to new growths of considerable significance, when it was sought to accommodate its popular forms to the representation of real life in a wider range, and again to render it more poetical in accordance with the tendencies of modern romanticism.

The regular Italian drama, in both its tragic and its comic branches, began with a reproduction, in the Latin language, of classical models; but tragedy in its beginnings showed a tendency to treat themes of national historical interest. Two of the earliest tragedies of which we hear, were written by the Paduan historian Mussato, about 1300, both being copies of Seneca; but while the one treated a classical theme, the other dealt with the history of a famous tyrant of the author's native city. In the next century events of recent or contemporary history were similarly dealt with, but the majority of Latin dramas were doubtless written to suit the tastes of the friends and patrons of the Italian renaissance, who, like Lorenzo the Magnificent, wished to domesticate the heathen gods and goddesses on a stage hitherto occupied by the sacred figures of Christian belief. Such were the imitations and translations of

Greek and Latin tragedies and comedies by Bishop Martirano, the friend of Lorenzo's son, Pope Leo X; the famous *Progne* of G. Corraro, the nephew of an earlier pope; and the efforts of Pomponius Laetus, who, with the aid of Cardinal Riaro, sought to revive the ancient theatre, especially that of Plautus and Terence, at Rome. Many Latin comedies are mentioned from the fifteenth century, during which, as during its predecessor, Latin continued the dominant language of the stage in Italy.

Early in the sixteenth century, tragedy began to be written in the native tongue; but it retained from the first, and never wholly lost, the impress of its origin. Whatever the source of its subjects, whether of classical origin, derived from native romance, or original invention, they were all treated with a predilection for the horrible, inspired by the example of Seneca, and encouraged by national taste. The chorus, stationary on the stage as in old Roman tragedy, was not reduced to a merely occasional appearance between the acts till the beginning of the seventeenth century, or ousted altogether from the tragic drama till the earlier half of the eighteenth. Thus the changes undergone were long confined chiefly to versification and the choice of themes; nor was it until the last century of its course, more than the after-growth of an after-growth.

Absence of a National Drama.

Alone among the great nations of the world, Italy stands in the unenviable position of possessing no drama

at the same time national and literary. In the drama of European countries three main classes may be distinguished. First, there is the rude popular play, entirely a creation of the people, such as the buffooneries of the Dionysiac festival, out of which the Athenian drama grew, or the dramatic exhibitions at fairs of itinerant actors barely distinguishable from the mountebanks. Performances of this nature have probably existed in every nation endowed with the rudiments of culture. Second, when these crude beginnings are elevated by men of genius into the sphere of art, and become literary without ceasing to be popular. This is true national drama, when the pulses of the poet and the people beat in full unison, and of which Greece, England and Spain have given to the world the most brilliant examples. Third, we have the artificial drama, written by men of culture for men of culture, but neglecting, or at least failing to reach the heart of the people. With the exception of the comedies of Goldoni and Gozzi, which belong to a later period than that which we are now considering, the whole of the Italian drama possessing any literary pretensions belongs to the last of these classes, though accompanied by a lower order of dramatic composition, which may be regarded as popular. In the early days we have the *Rappresentazioni,* at a later period the *Commedia dell' Arte;* but neither is, strictly speaking, literature.

It is indeed somewhat surprising that a nation so dramatically gifted as the Italian should not only have never possessed a national drama, but should have no dramatic writer worthy to be ranked among the great

masters of the art. Lively, emotional, capable of being worked up to the most violent degrees of passion, at the same time observant, sagacious, reflective members of a community comprising every variety of character and profession, and inheritors of a history replete with moving and tragic incidents, Italians should seem to have wanted no requisite for the creation of a flourishing stage. Prolific they were, indeed; nearly five thousand plays were written between 1500 and 1700, but of these there are not a score which enjoy any considerable reputation outside of Italy, or which, whatever their literary merit, can be considered characteristically Italian. One reason was probably the remarkable development of Italian culture at an early period, as compared with that of other European nations. The ablest men had become fully acquainted with Seneca and Terence, and looked upon them as painters looked upon Raphael, or sculptors upon Phidias. They deemed them the norm of excellence, and condemned themselves to a sterile imitation, which might, and often did, possess high literary merit, but which was entirely estranged from popular sympathies. Men like Politian and Pontano, who might have created a national drama if they could have trusted their own instincts, were deterred from producing anything at variance with the canons in which they themselves believed. It must, however, be admitted that the classical school, with all its defects, was vastly in advance of the rude, amorphous beginnings of the romantic drama in other countries. It nevertheless remains to be explained why, throughout their entire history, with a few marked

exceptions in particular departments, the Italians have never had a drama that they could justly call their own.

Inception of Modern Drama.

In the beginning, indeed, the Italian drama had a distinct nationality, with frequent representations of public events upon the stage, quite in the spirit of Shakespeare's historical plays. Two types may be discriminated—one adhering very closely to that of the *Rappresentazioni*, and composed in the vernacular; the other following classical models, and in Latin. To the latter belongs the very tedious play of Carlo Verardi on the fall of Granada, performed before Cardinal Riario in 1492; but the lost dramatic chronicle of the usurpations and downfall of the house of Borgia, a very remarkable composition, acted before the Duke of Urbino on the recovery of his states in 1504, seems rather to have belonged to the former class. To this type also is allied the first Italian drama of genuine literary merit, the *Orfeo* of Politian, which may be termed a pastoral melodrama with a tragic climax. The dialogue is mostly in octave stanzas, as in the *Rappresentazioni*, and the object is evidently rather to delight the spectators by a rapid succession of scenes admitting of musical accompaniment than to "purge the soul by pity and terror." Slight as is this juvenile work of Politian, it is the work of a poet, and written with a swing and rush which recall the lyrical parts of the *Bacchæ* of Euripides. It indicates what the *Rappresentazioni* might have become but for the competition of

the more classical type of drama, and seems a prelude to the thoroughly national species of composition which arose in the seventeenth and became common in the eighteenth century—the opera.

The Italian stage had thus made a respectable beginning with the drama a century before any drama worthy of the name existed in England. The disappointment that followed such auspicious promise may be ascribed in great measure to the want of a representative public and a centre of social life. The emulation of a number of independent cities, so favorable to the development of the fine arts, prevented the growth of a national feeling, so essential to a national drama. The political circumstances of these communities, moreover, were inimical to the existence of a popular stage. Theatrical representations remained the amusement of courts, and when the general public was allowed to participate the play was so enveloped in show and spectacle as to appear the least part of the entertainment. It was not possible that under such circumstances the drama could deviate much from conventional models. Tragedy continued to be composed after the pattern of Seneca, an imitation of an imitation. Comedy, though also in bondage to classical precedents, could not avoid depicting contemporary manners, and hence displays more vitality and vigor.

Trissino.

Latin plays had been written by Italians from the beginning of the fifteenth century, and had included

comedies, now lost, by Petrarch and Æneas Sylvius. The first Italian tragedies, worthy of the name, were composed for the entertainment of the Court of Ferrara, and were written in the octave stanza or *terza rima*. No genius could have adapted this form to the exigencies of the stage, and a great step was taken when, in 1515, Trissino wrote his tragedy of *Sophonisba* in blank verse, retaining nothing of the lyrical element but the chorus. Though the piece marks an era, it is entirely lacking in poetry and pathos, and the best that can be said of it is that it would have made a good framework for some abler hand to have clothed with substance.

Trissino was a man of immense erudition and laborious intellect, who devoted himself to questions of grammatical and literary accuracy, studying the critics of antiquity with indefatigable diligence, and seeking to establish canons for the regulation of correct Italian composition. He was by no means deficient in originality of aim, and professed himself the pioneer of a new species of poetry, setting himself to supply the deficiencies of Italian literature by producing an epic in the heroic style and a tragedy that should compare with those of Athens. The *Italia Liberata* and the *Sophonisba*, meritorious but lifeless exercises, which entirely lacked the genius of poetry, were the result of these ambitious aims. In his works, more than in those of any other writer, it may be seen how the failure of Italian tragedy was inseparable from its artificial origin. It was the conscious product of cultivated persons, who aimed at nothing nobler than the imitation of the ancients and the observance of inapplicable rules. The

dramatic unities, as laid down by Aristotle, were not intended for all time, or for the modern drama.

Sixteenth Century Tragedies.

Trissino had many imitators, all of them devoid of qualifications, except the ambition for literary distinction. But ambition alone would not suffice, and no vestige of originality appears in any of them, except for Sperone's innovation of mingling lyrical metres with blank verse—a change by no means to be commended. Giovanni Rucellai produced his *Rosmunda* almost contemporaneously with the *Sophonisba*, and it was acted before Leo X in the Rucellai gardens during a papal visit to Florence. The chief merit of the *Rosmunda* is its brevity; but it has the fatal fault of being a story told in scenes and dialogues, instead of an action moving and expanding through a series of connected incidents. The same defect appears in Sperone's *Canace*, the story of which is horrible, while the situations show how little of dramatic genius the author brought to bear upon the hideous theme he had selected. Among other tragedies of the age are the *Matiamne* of Ludovico Dolce and the *Orbecche* of Cinthio, the novelist, whose *Epitia* contains the rude germ of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. At a somewhat later date tragedy was attempted by a true poet of great genius, who would assuredly have produced something memorable under favorable circumstances. But the composition of Tasso's *Torrismondo*, commenced in his youth, was long interrupted, and the

play was not completed until 1586, while under the depressing influences of his Mantuan exile. Hence it is wanting in energy, and, as Carducci remarks, "Tasso is too much of an eclectic, striving by a combination of the advantages of all styles to supply the one indispensable gift of poetical inspiration which misfortune had all but extinguished."

Italian Comedy.

The first Italian comedies, like the tragedies, were written in rhyme. One early example is entitled to notice, both on account of the subject and as the work of an excellent poet, the *Timone* of Boiardo. It is little more than a translation from Lucian's *Dialogues*, yet it was probably the channel through which Shakespeare gained his acquaintance with that work as revealed in his *Timon of Athens*.

The humanistic influences of the fifteenth century were hardly less favorable to national comedy at the outset than they had been to national tragedy, a fact to be greatly regretted, since it helped to check the growth of a national drama. We find that, at the close of that century, it was common to recite the plays of Plautus and Terence in their original language, though later they were translated into Italian for audiences unacquainted with the ancient classics. The history of Italian comedy, as a recognized form of art, may be dated from the *Calandra* of Bernardo Dovizio, afterward Cardinal Bibbiena, which was first performed at Urbino, probably in 1508. It makes little attempt at

delineation of character, but achieved immediate success by reproducing in the wittiest of vernacular the inventions of Plautus seasoned with the humor of Boccaccio. The plot is from the *Menæchmi*, the source of Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*, but Dovizio's idea of making the indistinguishable twins brother and sister enhances the comic effect at the expense of the morality—a matter of little consequence in those days. From Urbino the comedy passed through all the courts of Italy, finding the greatest favor at Rome, where Leo X more than once ordered its representation.

Leo the Tenth.

Leo had an insatiable appetite for scenic shows, and comedies of the new Latinizing style were his favorite recreation. But he also invited the Sienese company of the Rozzi, who played only farces, every year to Rome; nor was he averse to even less artistic buffoonery, as may be gathered from many of the stories told about him. In 1513 Leo opened a theatre upon the Capitol, and here in 1519, surrounded with two thousand spectators, he witnessed an exhibition of Ariosto's *Suppositi*. We have a description of the scene from the pen of an eye-witness, who relates how the pope sat at the entrance to the gallery leading into the theatre, and admitted with his benediction those whom he thought worthy of partaking of the night's amusement. When the house was full, he took his throne in the orchestra, and sat, with eyeglass in hand, to watch the play. Raphael had painted the scenery, which doubtless was

extremely beautiful. Leo's behavior scandalized the foreign ambassadors, who thought it indecorous that a pope should not only listen to the equivocal jests of the prologue, but also laugh immoderately at them. As usual, the inter-acts consisted of vocal and instrumental concerts, with ballets on classical and allegorical subjects.

Ariosto.

The great success of Dovizio's comedy tended to encourage rivalry, and especially by Ariosto and Machiavelli, men of vastly superior talent, and with a decided gift for satire. In the year following the exhibition of the *Calandra*, Ariosto produced the *Cassaria*, a comedy of intrigue on the Plautine model, and the same description is applicable to his other comedies, the *Suppositi*, the *Lena*, the *Negromante*, and the *Scolastica*. In all except the *Negromante* the action turns upon the stratagems of a knavish servant to obtain for his master the money indispensable for the gratification of his amorous desires. This style of comedy requires a well-contrived plot, and the maintenance of the interest throughout by a series of ingenious surprises and unforeseen incidents. In these Ariosto fully attains his object. Writing for the amusement of a court, he does not care to stray from the conventions which he knows will satisfy, and his pieces afford no measure of the success he might have attained if he had appealed to the public and essayed to depict Italian society as it really existed. One of the characters is exceedingly lifelike—the accommodating Dominican in

the *Scolastica*, who, armed with authority from the pope, is ready to commute the fulfilment of an inconvenient vow into the performance of some good work profitable to his order. The *Lena* presents the best picture of Ferrarese society, and in a light far more natural, less lurid, and less partial, than that which Machiavelli and Aretino shed upon the vices of their times.

Machiavelli.

Released from prison after the overthrow of his party and the loss of his political position in 1512, Machiavelli found solace in the composition of the *Mandragola*, or *Mandrake*, a piece acted before the pope. Its cynicism is worse than its immorality, the plot consisting in the stratagem by which an innocent young wife is persuaded to admit a lover; all the personages, including the husband, who is himself deceived, coöperating for this purpose. Disagreeable as is the situation, it is probably founded upon fact; and at all events the play is no pale copy of Plautus or Terence, but full of consistent and strongly individualized characters, and scenes of the most drastically comic effect. The portrait of the rascally father confessor is particularly vigorous. In this comedy Machiavelli put forth all his strength, and repulsive as it may be to modern tastes, its power is indubitable, offering a most vivid description of Florentine life from its author's point of view. A few more plays of equal merit would have gone far to elevate the tone of the Italian stage; but no successor to Machiavelli appeared; his *Clizia* is little more than

a paraphrase of the *Casina* of Plautus, and the *Commedia in Prosa* and *Commedia in Versi,* commonly ascribed to him, are of doubtful authenticity.

If Machiavelli had devoted his talents to the drama, instead of to politics, he would doubtless have won fame as a writer of comedy. In novelty of plot, delineation of character, and strength and vivacity of dialogue, the little that he has left us is far superior to all that Italy had then, and perhaps has since produced. In perusing his works we cannot but recognize the ability of the master who conceived them, the elevation from which he judges the beings whom he has depicted with so much truth, and his profound contempt for the duplicity and hypocrisy which he exposes. In other fields of literature he shows the touch of a master's hand. His tale of *Belfagor,* or the devil who takes refuge in hell to avoid a scold, has been translated into all European languages, and remodeled in French by La Fontaine. His poems are remarkable rather for vigor of thought than for harmony and grace of style and expression, some being merely history in verse and others burlesque or satirical fragments. But the pleasantries of the author are usually mingled with gall, and when he indulges in humor, it is always in derision of the human race. It was thus, for instance, that he wrote the Carnival songs, to be recited by different troops of masks, each dance having a song or ode appropriated to its character and disguise. In the manner in which he introduces this popular feast, preceded by a chorus of demons, we recognize all the gloom and moroseness of the great Italian cynic.

Driven from the mansions of immortal bliss,
Angels no more, the fate
Of pride was ours.
Yet claim we here, in this
Your rude and ravaged state,
More torn with faction and fierce powers
Of vengeance than our realms of hate,
The rule we lost in Heaven, o'er man below,
Famine, war, blood, fierce cold and fiercer fire;
Lo! on your mortal heads
These vials pour our hands that never tire;
And we, while the glad season spreads
The feast and dance, are with you now,
And must with you remain,
To foster grief and pain.
And plague you with fresh woes and crimes that bring forth woe.

Pietro Aretino.

In connection with Machiavelli may be mentioned one of his contemporaries who acquired almost an equal, though an infamous celebrity, and that is Pietro Aretino. Those who are not acquainted with the works of either regard them both with equal horror; the first, as the abettor of political crime, and the other, as having made a boast of his impiety, immorality and profligacy. Such, however, was the power of wit, and the favor shown to poets in the sixteenth century, that Charles V, Francis I, and the greatest men of the age, loaded Aretino with honors, and admitted him to their intimacy. An acknowledged friend of Leo X and Clement VII, he was recommended to Paul III by his son, the duke of Parma, as deserving of a cardinal's hat, and had nearly attained that distinction, on the death

of Paul, from his successor, Julius III. He composed during a long life (1492 to 1557) a great number of works, which are scarcely read at the present day. Some of these owed their reputation to their extreme licentiousness; others, to the caustic satire with which he attacked his powerful enemies; many, which were purchased at an extraordinary price by reigning sovereigns, are filled with the most base and degrading flatteries; and others, in no small number, are devotional pieces, which the author, an enemy to every religious faith and to all morals, wrote only because they brought him a larger sum of money. Notwithstanding this profligacy of mind and heart, Aretino received from his contemporaries the epithet of Il Divino. Possessed of assurance of every description, he adopted this title himself, repeated it on all occasions, and attached it to his signature as a person attaches a title to his name.

His life was sullied by every species of vice. His enemies, who found they could not wound the honor of a man who professed to have none, were obliged to have recourse to personal chastisement, which, in consequence, he frequently underwent. At other times he drew on himself more serious attacks. At Rome, a Bolognese gentleman struck him with his poinard, and lamed him for life. Pietro Strozzi, a marshal of France, against whom he had written some satirical pieces, threatened to have him assassinated in his bed; and the unfortunate Aretino shut himself up in his home, in inexpressible terror, and thus led a prisoner's life, until Strozzi had quitted Italy. Tintoretto, whom he had attacked with his accustomed virulence, ac-

cidentally meeting him near his house, and feigning ignorance of what he had written, told him that he had long wished for an opportunity of painting his portrait. He led him into his house, placed him on a chair, and suddenly presenting a pistol, advanced against him in a menacing attitude. "How now, Giacomo!" cried the terrified poet. "I am only taking your measure," gravely answered the painter; and added, in the same tone, "I find you just four and a half pistol lengths." He then bade him instantly depart, an injunction which Aretino lost no time in obeying. It seemed, indeed, probable that he would have died either by the dagger or bodily chastisement, but he was reserved for a lighter death. He had some sisters at Venice, whose lives were as dissolute as his own. A person was one day recounting to him some of their amours, and he found them so comic that he threw himself back with violence in his chair. The chair fell backwards, his head struck against the marble floor, and he died instantaneously, at the age of sixty-five.

Had Aretino been a writer of genius, Italy might have owed to his audacity and self-reliance the starting-point for her national dramatic art. He was on the right path, but he lacked the skill to tread it. His comedies, loosely put together, with no constructive vigor in their plots and no grasp of psychology in their characters, are a series of powerfully-written scenes, piquant dialogues, and effective situations rather than comedies in the higher sense of the word. "They depict," says one of his critics, "the great world from the standpoint of the servants' hall. They are the work of a low-minded man,

who could see nothing but the baser traits of the society around him, but saw these clearly, and also saw no reason why he should not blazon what he saw. Hence his usefulness is in the ratio of his offensiveness."

Many comedies of considerable merit succeeded Machiavelli's, among which may be mentioned those of Firenzuola, who followed Roman precedents, and of Cecchi, and Gelli, and Grazzini, who to a considerable extent disengaged themselves from tradition. Angelo Beolco struck upon a new vein in the delineation of rustic life, involving the employment of dialect; and, near the end of the century, the life of the people was represented with extreme vividness by Buonarotti, nephew of Michael Angelo, in his *Fiera* and *Tancia*. Nicolo Franco, after being brought up in the school of Aretino, had a furious quarrel with him; but attacked, with no less effrontery than his rival, the government and the public morals. This he did so fiercely and persistently that, to put a stop to his pasquinades, Pio V caused him to be hanged.

It would be difficult to render an account of the comedies produced by the Italians in the sixteenth century, or to catalogue their authors. A computation has been made which gives the plays known to students at several thousands; but in spite of this extraordinary richness in comic literature, Italy cannot boast of a really great comedian. No poet arose to carry the art onward from the point already reached when Aretino left the stage. The neglect that fell on those innumerable comedies was not wholly undeserved. It is true that their scenes suggested brilliant episodes to French

and English playwrights of celebrity; it is true that the historian of manners finds in them an almost inexhaustible store of matter, but they are literary lucubrations rather than the spontaneous expression of a vivid nationality. Nor have they the subordinate merit of dealing in a scientific spirit with the cardinal vices and follies of society. We miss the original plots, the powerful modeling of character, the philosophical insight, which would have entitled him to a high position in the domain of comedy.

Modern Arcadia.

The transition from the middle ages to the Renaissance was marked by a new ideal, which exercised a powerful influence over Italian literature. The sensibilities of men athirst for some consoling fancy took refuge in the dream of a past golden age. On one side the ideal was purely literary, reflecting the artistic instincts of a people enthusiastic for form, and affording scope for their imitative activity; but, on the other, it corresponded to a deep and genuine Italian feeling. That sympathy with rustic life, that love of nature humanized by industry, that delight in the villa, the garden, the vineyard, and the grove, which modern Italians inherited from their Roman ancestors, gave reality to what might otherwise have been but artificial. Vespasiano's anecdotes of Cosimo de' Medici pruning his own fruit-trees; Ficino's description of the village feasts at Montevesshio; Flamminio's picture of his Latin farm; Alberti's tenderness in gazing at the autumn fields—all these have the ring of genuine emotion. For men who

thus loved the country, the age of gold was no mere fiction, and Arcady was a land of possibilities.

What has been well called la volutta idillica—the sensuous love of beauty, finding fit expression in the idyll—formed a marked characteristic of Renaissance art and literature. Boccaccio developed this motive in all of his works which dealt with the customs of society. Poliziano and Lorenzo devoted their best poetry to the praise of rural bliss, the happiness of shepherd folk anterior to life in cities. The same theme recurs in the Latin poems of the humanists; it pervades the ode, the sonnet, and takes to itself the chief honors of the drama.

In rural bliss a literary Eldorado was discovered which was destined to attract explorers through the next three centuries. Arcadia became the wonder-world of noble youths and maidens, at Madrid no less than at Ferrara, in Eliazbeth's London and in Marie Antoinette's Versailles. After engaging the genius of Tasso and Guarini, Spenser and Sidney, it degenerated into quaint conventionality. Companions of Turenne and Marlborough told tales of pastoral love to maids of honor near the throne. Frederick and Maria Theresa's courtiers simpered and sighed like Dresden-china swains and shepherdesses. Crooked sticks with ribbons at the tops were fashionable appendages to red-heeled shoes and powdered perukes. Few phenomena in the history of literature are more curious than the prolonged prosperity and wide-spread fascination of this Arcadian romance. Yet, as with other forms of the pastoral drama, it has gone as entirely out of fashion as have

the simpering madonnas and impossible Christs which formed almost the only art of the middle ages.

Sannazzaro.

To Jacopo Sannazzaro belongs the glory of having first explored Arcadia, mapped out its borders, and called it after his own name. He is the Columbus of this visionary hemisphere. His ancestors, who appear to have been originally Spaniards, settled in a village of Pavia called S. Nazzaro, whence they took their name. The poet's immediate forefather was said to have followed Charles of Durezzo in 1380 to the south of Italy, where he received fields and lands. Jacopo was born at Naples in 1458, and, as a youth, made such rapid progress in both Greek and Latin scholarship as soon to be found worthy of admission to Pontano's academy. The friendship between the master and pupil lasted without interruption up to the time of the death of the former in 1503. Their Latin poems abound in passages which testify to a strong mutual regard, and the life-size effigies of both may still be seen together in the church of Monte Oliveto at Naples. Distinction in scholarship was at that time a sure title to consideration at the Neapolitan court. Sannazzaro attached himself to the person of Frederick, the second son of Ferdinand I; and when this prince succeeded to the throne he conferred upon the poet a pension and a beautiful villa. When Frederick was forced to retire to France in 1501, Sannazzaro accompanied his royal master into exile, only returning to Naples after the ex-king's death, and

there he continued to reside until his own death in 1530. The *Arcadia* was begun at Nocera in his youth, continued during his residence in France, and finished in Naples.

The *Arcadia* blends autobiography and fable in a narrative of very languid interest. Loose in construction and uncertain in aim, it lacks the clearness and consistency of perfect art. And yet it is a masterpiece; because its author contrived to make it reflect one of the deepest and most permanent emotions of his time. The whole pastoral ideal—the yearning after a golden age, the beauty and pathos of the country, the felicity of simple folk, the details of rustic life, the charm of woods and gardens, the mythology of Pan and the Satyrs, of nymphs and fauns—all this is expressed in a series of pictures idyllically graceful and artistic. For English readers the *Arcadia* has a special interest, since it begot the longer and more ambitious work of Sir Philip Sidney.

Tasso.

Other pastoral dramas followed in quick succession, but none above mediocrity, until we come to Tasso's *Aminta*, published in 1573. Few novel experiments in literature have enjoyed a more immediate or more permanent success, and numerous as were the *Aminta's* imitators, its superiority has never been seriously challenged. It is, indeed, deficient in the rich poetry of its English rival, the *Faithful Shepherdess*, "as inferior, poetically speaking," says Leigh Hunt, "as a lawn with a few trees on it is to the depths of a forest."

But he confesses its superiority in "true dramatic skill, and flesh and blood," for it is very far removed from the insipidity usually associated with pastoral compositions. It has also more of the genuine yearning for the golden age, the spirit which inspires Keat's *Endymion*, than is found in the fanciful dramas of Fletcher or Ben Jonson. "Its central motive," says Symonds in his *History of the Renaissance*, "is the contrast between the actual world of ambition, treachery and sordid strife, and the ideal world of pleasure, loyalty and tranquil ease."

Guarini.

If the supremacy of the *Aminta* has ever been disputed, it is by the *Pastor Fido* of Giovanni Battista Guarini. The descendant of a Veronese family already distinguished in letters, Guarini was, like Tasso, attached to the court of the duke of Ferrara; but, unlike Tasso, he was a man of the world, and was employed in several important missions, especially to solicit the crown of Poland for his master. Like most of the duke's literary protégés, he became estranged from him, and spent the later part of his life in roaming from court to court in quest of employment, and litigating with his children and the world at large. His disposition was quarrelsome; literary disputes had long severed him from Tasso, but it is to his honor that, when the latter was unable to watch over his own works, he took care of and polished his lyrical poems. The most brilliant episode of Guarini's life was the

publication of his *Pastor Fido*, in 1590, but not the least troublesome was the literary controversy in which it involved him. These disputes, born of the jealousy of the Italian literati, are now forgotten, and to the *Pastor Fido* is conceded an honorable, though a second place. Its relation to its predecessor may be compared to that of the Corinthian order to the Ionic. Guarini has sought to compensate for the lack of natural, spontaneous inspiration by superior artifice of plot: his characters are more numerous, and his action more intricate and ingenious. This, of course, would not have availed him if he had not been a poet, but this he certainly was, and of the first rank, though he cannot be classed with his great contemporary. Tasso was conscious of a truer inspiration and conveys his claim to the virtual invention of a new method in poetry in the verses which he has placed in the mouth of Love appearing in the disguise of a shepherd, thus rendered by Leigh Hunt:

> After new fashion shall these woods to-day
> Hear love discoursed; and it shall well be seen
> That my divinity is present here
> In its own person, not its ministers.
> I will inbreathe high fancies in rude hearts;
> I will refine, and render dulcet sweet
> Their tongues; because, wherever I may be,
> Whether with rustic or heroic men,
> There am I Love; and inequality,
> As it may please me, I do equalize;
> And 'tis my crowning glory and great miracle
> To make the rustic pipe as eloquent
> Even as the subtlest harp.

Guarini frequently repeated Tasso's ideas, striving to enhance their effect by careful elaboration. The poetry of one or both has passed into Calderon's *Magico Prodigioso*, and originated the scene of the temptation of Justina, an ornament of English literature in the incomparable version of Shelley.

Review of the Renaissance Period.

Taking a backward glance at the drama of Italy during the sixteenth century, we find there a higher development than in any other European country. In comedy the first productions were, as we have seen, little more than pedantic copies of Plautus and Terence, represented at the expense of the courts, before learned audiences. But presently, though we do not know the precise period, troops of professional comedians possessed themselves of these dramas, and recited them before the public for hire. From that time the tastes of the public became a matter of greater importance to actors and authors. It was no longer sufficient that a piece was made conformable to the rules which the critics pretended to have deduced from the ancients; it was also requisite that it should interest or amuse. Machiavelli and Pietro Aretino had shown how laughter might be excited by the delineation of modern manners and vices. The example of Terence was gradually neglected, and a crowd of authors undertook, with less erudition, indeed, but with more vivacity, to entertain the public. The most remarkable among them was Anton Maria Grassini, of Florence, who endeavored

to give to his native drama manners and rules entirely national, and who overwhelmed with ridicule both the pedants and the disciples of Petrarch, the first for their lifeless imitation of the ancients, the second for their Platonic love, their devotion to their mistresses and the tender mysticism which rendered all their lyric poetry equally insipid. A great number of comic writers followed in the footsteps of Giovanni Battista Gelli, but among them was not a single comic genius. If the earlier authors were justly reproached with pedantry, those who followed were equally chargeable with ignorance and negligence. Content to draw laughter from the populace by their coarse and unpolished jests, they ignored the art of disposing and unravelling the plot and of giving a true delineation of character.

Nearly all these comedies, so numerous and so indifferent, owe their existence to the academies and were there represented. Italy was thronged in this age with literary societies, which took the title of academies, and which assumed at the same time absurd and fanciful names. Among other exercises, the composition and recitation of comedies, with a view of restoring the drama of the ancients, was one of the earliest occupations of these societies. To this object their efforts were principally directed, and as the performance of the play was at the same time amusing and profitable, even the small towns maintained their academies, chiefly for the purpose of giving theatrical performances to the public. Thus is explained the rapid multiplication of academies, so remarkable in the history of Italy, and of which the object was long un-

discovered. Even in the nineteenth century nearly all the theatres of Italy belonged to these societies, the title and academical privileges passing from father to son and sometimes being sold. While the academicians no longer perform in person, they hire out their theatres to strolling companies, giving pretentious literary titles to associations devoted to pleasure and profit.

The wandering companies who thus occupied the theatres of Italy also took their rise in the sixteenth century, but in an obscure manner, which has never been thoroughly explained. For their origin we must look to the mountebanks who began to represent, on temporary stages, farces of ever-increasing length, so that what was at first only an extempore dialogue between a couple of strolling players assumed, by degrees, the form of a comedy, gradually developing into the *Commedia dell'Arte*. The pieces were not written out, but a certain character was assigned to each actor, together with a provincial dialect. Hence, also, the invention of the masks of pantaloon, harlequin and columbine, who, for nearly four centuries, continued to furnish an inexhaustible fund of entertainment.

To speak more exactly, the Commedia dell'Arte was a development of the Commedia e Sogetto, or Improvised comedy, which, in turn, was a descendant of the ancient Roman Atellanæ. The invention of the Commedia dell'Arte is attributed to Francisco Cherea, the favorite player of Leo X. Its scenes, still unwritten except in skeleton, were connected together by links, corresponding to the Roman sannio. It was in this species of performance that the summit of harlequin's

glory was reached, when, in the seventeenth century, he was ennobled in the person of Cecchino by the emperor Matthias. Of his successors we read, however, that "they shut the door in Italy to good comedy." Entirely distinct from this growth was that of the so-called "masked comedy," the action in which was carried on by certain typical figures in masks, all speaking in local dialects, but which were not improvised, and from the nature of the play could not have been. The inventor was one Beolco, of Padua, calling himself "joker," who published six comedies in various dialects, including the modern Greek of the day. According to a leading authority, the masked characters included Pantalone, a Venetian merchant; Dottore, a Bolognese physician; Spaviento, a Neapolitan braggadocio; Pullicinella, an Apulian wag; Coviello, a Calabrian clown; Gelfomino, a Roman beau; Brighella, a Ferrarese pimp, and Arlechino, a blundering servant of Bergamo. Besides these and other personages, of whom at least four appeared in each piece, there were the Amorosos or Innamoratas, lovers and their beloved—though women never appeared on the Italian stage until 1560—together with the Columbina, Spilletta and other waiting-maids, all unmasked and speaking either in the Roman or Tuscan language. Such, in brief, was the masked comedy, to which the Italians so tenaciously clung.

We have now reached the limit of the Italian Renaissance, which permeated the entire literature of the age, bequeathing, in a new form of art, its form and influence to succeeding generations throughout the civilized world.

VIII.

The Spanish, French and English Renaissance.

The mediæval, and in part the modern, literature of Spain differs from that of other European countries in that it is decidedly oriental, with a different spirit and a different sphere of ideas. Hence he who would judge it aright should first become perfectly familiar with it; for nothing can be more unjust than to estimate by our own notions of poetry, which the Spaniards neither recognize nor regard, works with which they have so little in common. The first thing to be noticed about Spanish literature, and especially dramatic literature, is its extreme fecundity; for there are more dramas in Spanish than in all the other languages of Europe combined, and hence the greater need of care in the selection of specimens.

The literature of Spain manifests itself in sudden and fitful lights. At one instant we admire it, and at the next it is lost in obscurity; but such glimpses always induce a desire to see more of it. The first great tragic writer of the French stage borrowed his grandeur from the Spaniards, and after the *Cid*, which he imitated from Guillen de Castro, many tragi-comedies and ro-

mantic dramas may be traced to a Spanish origin. Le Sage, one of the greatest writers of romance, has all the Spaniard's genius, and in *Gil Blas*, though the work of a Frenchman, is a perfect picture of Spanish life and manners. *Don Quixote*, translated into all European languages, became known to the world for the wit and animation of its satires, and Spanish dramas and novels without number have since been adapted for the French and English stage.

Origin of Spanish Drama.

The Spaniards refer the origin of their drama, in the fifteenth century, to three distinct and very dissimilar sources: the Mystery plays represented in churches, the satirico-pastoral drama entitled *Mingo Revulgo*, and the dramatic romance of *Calixtus and Melibœa*, afterward styled *La Celestina*. The Mysteries, in which the most gross buffooneries were intermingled with religious solemnities, had unquestionably a decided influence on the Spanish drama, and the *Autos Sacramentales*—acts in honor of the sacraments—of the most famous authors, are largely formed on the model of these religious farces. The *Mingo Revulgo*, which was written during the reign of John II, in order to ridicule that monarch and his court, is rather a political satire in dialogue than a drama. *La Celestina*, the first act of which was written by an anonymous author toward the middle of the fifteenth century, may be considered the first attempt of the Spaniards in the line of historic comedy, which soon became a favorite form of the drama. Fernand de

Rojas, who published the entire work about the year 1510, asserts that this first act, which presents a singular picture of life in Castile, was written toward the middle of the fifteenth century by Juan de Mersa, or Rodrigo Cota, while he himself added the twenty acts that follow. This assertion has not been disputed, and there seems no reason to doubt it.

La Celestina.

The stage is supposed to represent a garden, in which Calixtus, a young and handsome cavalier, enters in pursuit of a falcon, and where he finds Melibœa, daughter of a great lord of the country. The piece commences as follows.

Calixtus.—I recognize clearly in this, oh Melibœa, the greatness of God!

Melibœa.—In what, Calixtus?

Cal.—In what? That he has given nature the power of arraying thee in such perfect beauty, and in according me, so little worthy, so high a favor as to behold thee; in a place, too, so convenient for acquainting you with my secret grief. Doubtless such a favor is incomparably greater than all services, sacrifices, devotion offered to God, in order that he might permit me to come here. What man was ever so glorified in this life as I am to-day? I am quite sure the glorious saints, who take such delight in the divine vision, cannot possess more bliss than I do now in contemplating thee. But, alas! see what a difference? While they are being glorified, they are in no fear of falling from so high a state; but my joy is alloyed with the torment thy absence must soon cause me.

Mel.—Do you, then, estimate this meeting at so high a price?

Cal.—Truly, it is so great that if God were to offer me the most precious earthly blessings I should esteem them of far less worth.

Mel.—However, if you persevere, I will give you a yet greater reward.

Cal.—Oh! my lucky ears, which, vile as they are, have heard a word so sweet!

Mel.—Unlucky, rather, as they will soon hear; for the punishment will be as severe as thy insensate boldness, and the tone of thy speech well merit. How dare a fellow like you think that a woman like me would so trifle with her virtue? Begone, begone, wretch! It is not in patience to bear the idea of seeing a man so far inflated as to express to me the delirium of an illicit amour.

After this reprimand Melibœa withdraws and appears no more during the first act. Calixtus remains on the stage with Sempronio, his valet, to whom he communicates his despair, gets into a rage with him, chases him off and calls him back again. He then describes his beloved in the most extravagant terms, pouring out a torrent of theological and fabulous lore.

Sempronio endeavors to enliven the scene by his pleasantries. He accuses his master of being a heretic, and in truth his accusations seem well merited. Probably the author's object is to prepare in this way the catastrophe.

Sempronio.—For my part, I protest that what you have just said is downright heresy!

Cal.—Why?

Semp.—Because it is against the Christian religion.

Cal.—And what care I?

Semp.—Are you not a Christian, then?

Cal.—I? I am a Melibœan; it is Melibœa whom I adore. I believe in Melibœa, and I love Melibœa.

After an intolerably tedious scene, and sallies of wit at least as indecent as profane, Sempronio at last tries to console his master by representing that his adored is still but a woman, that all women are frail, that all have capitulated, and that Melibœa will yield in her turn. He even pledges himself to bring the matter about.

Cal.—And how do you think of contriving this notable exploit?

Semp.—I am going to tell you. For some time past I have known an old hag with a beard, called Celestina, who lives near here. She is crafty and subtle, is an adept in sorcery and all kinds of wickedness. I am assured that in this town only there are five thousand young women whose reputations she has either destroyed or restored; nay, if she liked, she could make the very rocks themselves go mad with love!

Calixtus orders Sempronio to go in search of her. Sempronio visits Celestina, and meets his own mistress, Elsie, who had deceived him, in the company of another man. Though his jealousy is momentarily excited, Celestina contrives to soothe him, and, to prevent his declaring himself by his looks, persuades him to set out with her immediately to join Calixtus. The latter is attended by Parmenio, another of his valets. They see the hag approaching, and Parmenio gives free vent to the horror and contempt her sight inspires. Calixtus asks him the reason.

Parmenio.—That fine lady possesses, at a far end of the

town, close to a stream, a solitary house, half in ruins, of ugly aspect and vilely furnished. She there follows six different trades—those of a laundress, perfumeress, dealer in love-philters and charms, a botcher of lost reputations, a go-between and, finally, a witch. The first trade is a blind for all the others; under that pretence you see going to her house numbers of young femmes-de-chambres with linen. She has means of communicating with the most scrupulous women to gain her ends; she chooses the most favorable hours—at early mass, at night processions, at confessionals, and all other devotional appointments. I have frequently seen women in veils go into her house, followed by barefooted fellows, penitents, men in hoods, who doubtless went thither to bewail their sins.

Celestina is meanwhile introduced to Calixtus, who hastens to bring her the golden bribe. She remains with Parmenio, tries to corrupt him, and the dialogue is conducted with much spirit, displaying the skill of Celestina, and her insinuating character. She talks of her attachment to his mother, who, she declares, has entrusted her with money for him which she has kept quite safe. She makes him laugh with her licentious ribaldry; advises him to attach himself to Sempronio rather than his master, because the great have never any affection for the poor. Lastly, she promises her good offices with Arethusa, a cousin of Elsie's, whose love he shall possess. After these bye scenes Calixtus returns, gives her the money, and the act closes. The ancient author stopped there, his production being already the length of an ordinary comedy, though hardly begun.

The new writer added twenty acts, so long that a whole day would not suffice for their representation.

We can perceive little difference in the style, in the spirit of dialogue, and painting of the characters, any more than in the degree of license or wit, or the tableaux presented to the view of the spectators. Events are precipitated; on one side we see the amours of the two valets for Elsie and Arethusa; on the other, Celestina's insinuating art with Melibœa, first extorting an innocent favor, next an interview. She ends by receiving Calixtus into her apartment by night; but then the valets wish to constrain Celestina to divide the bribe she has received from their master with them. She refuses; they beat her, they kill her; justice pursues them, and the next morning they are beheaded, after having confessed their guilt and its motives, in the public place. Elsie and Arethusa vow to avenge the deaths of Celestina and the two valets on the head of Calixtus. They apply to some bandits smitten with their charms, and bring them to the house of Melibœa. Calixtus is assassinated as he is leaving it; and the lady, on learning the tidings, after confessing her fault to her parents, throws herself from the top of a tower.

Few works have had a success so brilliant as this drama. The author boasted that it was composed with a perfectly moral view, to warn the young against the snares of love, and especially of female panders. Nothing is said as to its representation; but it was read by every class of people; relished, perhaps, more for the evil examples it exhibited to view, than for the lessons it supplied with which to resist them. Widely diffused as the chef d'œuvre of Spanish works; printed in Spanish in other countries to promote the study of that

tongue; transferred to the Italian and the French; commented on by the clergy, though last of all condemned on the score of Celestina's immoralities; it is a work in which the Spanish literati still take pride for its nationality, and for opening, as they assert, the way to the dramatic career of other nations.

Romantic Drama.

While Italy produced many brilliant growths, from which the dramatic literatures of other nations largely borrowed, Spain is the only country of modern Europe which shares with England the honor of having achieved, at a relatively early date, the creation of a national form of the regular drama. So proper to Spain was the form which she produced and perfected, that to it the term romantic has been specifically applied, though such a restriction is not entirely justifiable. The influences which, from the Romance nations, with their Roman learning, culture and laws, spread to the Germanic races, were represented with the most signal force and fullness in the institutions of chivalry—to which, in the words of Sir Walter Scott, "it was peculiar to blend military valor with the strongest passions which actuate the human mind, the feelings of devotion and of love." These feelings, in their combined operation upon the national character, and in their reflection in the national literature, were not peculiar to Spain; but nowhere did they continue so long or so late to animate the moral life of a nation. Outward causes contributed to this result. For centuries

after the crusades had become a mere memory, Spain was a battle ground between the cross and the crescent. And it was precisely at the time when the Renaissance was establishing new starting-points for the literary progress of Europe, that she rose to the height of her glory through the expulsion of the Moors and the conquest of the New World.

From their rulers or rivals of many ages the Spaniards had derived that rich glow of color which became permanently distinctive of their national life, and more especially of their literary and artistic productions; they had also, perhaps, derived from the same source an equally characteristic refinement in their treatment of the passion of love. The ideas of Spanish chivalry—more especially religious devotion and a punctilious sense of personal honor—asserted themselves with peculiar distinctness in literature and art after the great achievements to which they had contributed in other fields had already been wrought. The ripest glories of the Spanish drama belong to an age of national decay, though always mindful of a greater past. Yet the chivalrous enthusiasm pervading so many of the masterpieces of its literature is a characteristic of the Spanish nation in all ages, even in the least hopeful periods of its later history; and the religious ardor breathed by these works, though associating itself with what is called the Catholic reaction, is in truth only a manifestation of the spirit which produced the Reformation movement itself. The Spanish drama neither sought nor could seek to emancipate itself from views and forms of religious life more than ever sacred to the Spanish people

since the glorious days of Ferdinand and Isabella; and it is not in the beginnings, but in the later eras of Spanish dramatic literature that there is often difficulty in deciding what is to be termed a religious and what a secular play. After Spain had thus fully unfolded that incomparably richest expression of national life and sentiment in artistic forms—a truly national drama—the terrible decay of her greatness and prosperity gradually impaired the strength of a brilliant but dependent growth. In the absence of strong original genius, the Spaniards began to turn to foreign models, though little supported in such attempts by popular sympathy; and it is only in more recent times that they have sought to reproduce the ancient forms from whose masterpieces the nation had never become estranged, while accommodating them to tastes and tendencies shared by later Spanish literature with that of Europe at large.

The earlier dramatic efforts of Spanish literature, apart from those already mentioned, require but the briefest of notice. The father of the Spanish drama was J. de la Enzina, whose *Representaciones,* under the name of eclogues, were dramatic dialogues of a religious or pastoral character. His attempts were imitated more especially by Gil Vicente, a Portuguese who wrote both in Spanish and in his native tongue; the dramatic literature of Portugal having produced nothing of equal merit before or since. A further impulse came, as was natural, from Spaniards resident in Italy, and especially from Naharro, who in 1517 published, as the chief among the "firstlings of his genius," a series of eight commedias—a term commonly applied in Spanish litera-

ture to any kind of drama. He claimed some knowledge of the theory of the ancient drama, divided his plays into jornadas, to correspond to acts, and opened them with a prologue. Very various in their subjects, and occasionally odd in form, they were gross as well as audacious in tone, and were soon prohibited by the Inquisition. The church was unwilling to surrender her control over such dramatic exhibitions as she permitted, and sought to suppress the few plays not strictly on religious subjects which appeared in the early part of the reign of Charles I. The few translations published from the classical drama exercised no effect.

Lopé de Rueda.

Thus the foundation of the Spanish national theatre was reserved for a man of the people. Cervantes has vividly sketched the humble resources which were at the command of Lopé de Rueda in 1544-1567. A mechanic of Seville, with his friend, the bookseller Timoneda, and two brother authors and actors in his strolling company, he succeeded in transferring dramatic entertainments from churches and palaces into the public places of the towns, where they were produced on temporary scaffolds. The manager carried about his properties in a corn sack; and the "comedies" were still only "dialogues, and a species of eclogues between two or three shepherds and a shepherdess," enlivened at times by intermezzos of favorite comic figures. One of Rueda's plays, at least, and one of Timoneda's, seem to have been taken from an Italian

source; others mingled modern themes with classical apparitions; still others of a slighter description were called *pasos*—a species afterward termed *entremeses* and resembling the modern French *proverbes*. With these popular efforts of Lopé de Rueda and his friends a considerable dramatic activity began in the years 1560-1590 in several Spanish cities, and before the close of this period permanent theatres began to be fitted up at Madrid. Yet, for a time, the Spaniards seemed inclined to follow the Italians in turning to an imitation of classical models, and in this direction pointed the two plays by Bermudez on the national subject of Inez de Castro; the *Dido* of C. de Virues, and the tragedies of L. L. de Argensola.

Cervantes.

Such was the condition of the Spanish drama, when, at last, about the same time as that of the English, its future was determined by writers of original genius. The first of these was the immortal Cervantes, who, however, failed to anticipate by his earlier plays the great success of his famous romance. In his endeavor to give a poetic character to the drama he fell upon the expedient of introducing personified abstractions speaking a "divine" or elevated language—a device which was for a time favorably received. But these plays exhibit a neglect or ignorance of the laws of dramatic construction; their action is episodical: and it is from the realism of these episodes, especially in the *Numancia*, which is crowded with both figures and incidents, and from the power and flow of the declama-

tion, that their effect must have been derived. When, in later years, Cervantes returned to dramatic composition, the style and form of the national drama had been definitively settled by a large number of writers, the brilliant success of whose acknowledged chief may previously have diverted Cervantes from his labors for the theatre. His influence upon the general progress of dramatic literature is, however, to be sought, not only in his plays, but also in those *novelas exemplares* to which some of the best Spanish dramas are indebted for their plot, and for much of their dialogue.

The author of *Don Quixote* stands foremost in that band of classic authors who cast such glory on the reigns of the three Philips, during the latter part of the sixteenth and the commencement of the seventeenth century.

Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra was born in poverty and obscurity, in 1549, at Alcala de Henares. He assumed the title of hidalgo, or gentleman, but nothing is known of his family or early education, except that he was sent to a school in Madrid, where he acquired some knowledge of the classics. During this period he read with extreme avidity all the poets and romance-writers of Spain, and set the highest value, even at this early period of his life, on elegance of diction and on preserving the purity of the Castilian language. He wrote in his youth a number of poems and romances, as well as a pastoral romance, entitled *Filena*, which has been lost. Compelled to travel in search of a livelihood, which he was unable to find at home, he attached himself to the person of Cardinal Aquaviva, with whom he

visited Rome, but soon abandoning the servile office which he had accepted from the prelate, he entered the army, and served under Marc-Antonio Colonna. He was also present under the banners of Don John of Austria at the battle of Lepanto, where he lost his left hand by a wound from an arquebuss. Being obliged to renounce the profession of arms, probably without having risen above the rank of a common soldier, he embarked for Spain; but the vessel in which he was sailing being captured by a Barbary corsair, he was carried to Algiers, and there remained five years and a half in slavery, until ransomed in 1581.

Thus did Cervantes return to his native country, maimed, penniless and friendless, without prospects and without resources; but such was the strength of his mind, the liveliness of his temper and the vigor of his imagination, that he not only gained the means of livelihood, but acquired a high reputation by his dramatic genius, which he exercised in the composition of comedies and tragedies, all of them received with marked approbation by the public. He was thirty-five years of age when he published his *Galatea,* and soon afterward he gave to the theatre about thirty comedies, which have not been preserved. The rivalry of Lopé de Vega, who, about the same period, met with prodigious success, induced him for some time to lay aside his pen. He had married, and he was then, probably, living on the means which his wife had brought him, though before his marriage it appears that he obtained at Seville some little office, which preserved him from absolute want. In 1605, Cervantes, who had not

appeared before the public for one-and-twenty years, gave to the world the first part of his *Don Quixote.* The success of this work was remarkable; thirty thousand copies are said to have been struck off in the author's lifetime; it was translated into all languages, and was loudly praised by all classes of readers. Philip III seeing, from his balcony, a student walking along the banks of the Mançanares, and as he read bursting into involuntary fits of laughter, said to his courtiers that the man was either mad or reading *Don Quixote.* Neither Philip III, however, nor any of his courtiers, thought fit to offer assistance to an indigent author, who was the glory of Spain, and who had written a work so full of comic talent within the walls of a prison, where he was confined for debt.

The conclusion of the sixteenth century and the commencement of the seventeenth century was a very learned epoch. The best Spanish scholars of this period, becoming disciples of the classical authors, upheld with much fervor the poetical system of Aristotle and the rules of the three unities. Dramatic writers, while they recognized the authority of these rules, neglected to act upon them, for they were compelled to follow the tastes of the public. Yet they confessed in a curious manner the superiority of the laws which they ignored. Lopé de Vega, in some verses addressed to the Academy of Poetry at Madrid, exculpates himself from this charge in the following manner:

> I write a play! Then, ere I pen a line,
> Under six locks and keys let me confine
> All rules of art—Next, Plautus! 'tis thy doom,

And, Terence, thine, to quit forthwith the room,
Lest ye upbraid me.—Books can speak, though dumb,
And tell unwelcome truths. By other laws
I write, laid down by those who seek applause
From vulgar mouths; what then? the vulgar pay;
They love a fool—and let them have their way.

Cervantes, in the first part of his *Don Quixote*, introduces a canon of Toledo, who, after blaming the Spaniards with some asperity for having perpetually violated the laws of the dramatic art, regrets that the government has not established a censor for the drama, who might have power to prevent the representation of pieces, not only when they are injurious to morals, but likewise when they offend against the laws of classical poetry.

Dramas of Cervantes.

If the magistrate thus proposed by Cervantes had been instituted, and had he been, by any possibility, inaccessible to intrigue, to favor and to prejudice, he would probably have forbidden the representation of the dramas of Cervantes, since they are by no means constructed upon those classical rules, the neglect of which the poet so deeply regrets. The tragedy of *Numantia* and the comedy of *Life in Algiers* are the only two which have been preserved out of twenty or thirty dramas, written soon after the author's release from captivity. Those which he published in 1615 were never represented, and it is from the preface to the latter that the above sketch of dramatic art has been quoted. When Cervantes speaks of this work of his

old age, his simplicity and gayety have in them something touching, for it is evident that he was suffering an inward mortification, more severe in proportion as his poverty rendered success desirable.

"Some years since," says he, "I returned to the ancient occupation of my leisure hours; and imagining that the age had not passed away in which I used to hear the sound of praise, I again began to write comedies. The birds, however, had flown from their nest. I could find no manager to ask for my plays, though they knew that I had written them. I threw them, therefore, into the corner of a trunk, and condemned them to eternal obscurity. A bookseller then informed me that he would have bought them, had he not been told by a celebrated author that much dependence might be placed upon my prose but none upon my poetry. To say the truth, this information mortified me much. I said to myself: 'Certainly, I am either changed or the world, contrary to its custom, has become much wiser, for in past time I used to meet with praise.' I read my comedies anew, together with some interludes which I had placed with them. I found that they were not so bad but they might pass from what this author called darkness into what others may, perhaps, term noon-day. I was angry, and sold them to the bookseller who has now printed them. They have paid me tolerably, and I have pocketed my money with pleasure and without troubling myself about the opinions of the actors. I was willing to make them as excellent as I could; and if, dear reader, thou findest anything good in them, I pray thee, when thou

meetest any other calumniator, to tell him to amend his manners, and not to judge so severely, since, after all, the plays contain not any incongruities or striking faults."

The dramas of Cervantes require, indeed, all the indulgence which the author himself entreated from his readers. In order to be just toward him we must commence by rejecting all our theatrical prepossessions, remembering that he wrote before any of those authors whom we regard as the legislators of the drama, that he wrote upon a different system and with another object in view. Let us, then, consider his dramas as a series of pictures, all connected by the chain of historical interest, though varying in subject. In some he has endeavored to excite the noblest sentiments of the heart: in his *Numantia*, patriotism; in his *Life in Algiers*, compassion for the unfortunate. Such are the only unities for which we must seek in his dramas. Let us abandon ourselves to his eloquence, without endeavoring to resist the feelings of terror or pity which he seeks to awake; and let us forget, if it be in our power, those rules which our own dramatists obey, but which to him are entirely inapplicable. When we analyze even the models of antiquity, we do not apply to all of them rules equally severe. We do not forget that Æschylus, like Cervantes, was in the van of his art. Perhaps, if we compared the *Numantia* with the *Agamemnon* or with the *Prometheus*, many points of resemblance between these two celebrated authors would strike us. We should probably find that, in the grandeur of the incidents, in the depth of feeling, in the nature and

language of the allegorical personages introduced upon the stage, and, lastly, in the patriotic sentiments of the compositions, the oldest of the Spanish dramatists has approached nearer to the most ancient of the Greek tragedians than any intentional imitation could have accomplished.

The Numantia.

A strong feeling of patriotism is manifested by Cervantes in his *Numantia*. He has taken as the subject of his tragedy the destruction of a Spanish city which valiantly opposed the Romans, and whose inhabitants, rather than surrender themselves to the enemy, preferred perishing beneath the ruins of their homes, slaughtering one another, and precipitating themselves into flames. The subject is not one which would be considered, at the present day, as suitable to the purposes of the drama. It is too extensive, too public, too little adapted to the display of individual passions, and of those motives which operate upon persons and not upon nations. A certain degree of admiration, however, cannot be refused to this awesome drama, so full of woe that it seems like an expiatory sacrifice offered up to the manes of a great city.

A striking scene represents the interior of Numantia. The council of war is assembled, and Theogenes, having given an account of the failure of the sacrifices, of the enchantments, and of the challenge, proposes again to make a sally. The warriors dread the opposition of their wives, whom they will be compelled to abandon. The women, informed of the proposed sortie, crowd

around the council-chamber with their infants in their arms, and each, in eloquent language, demands to share the fortunes of her husband:

> What is it that you wish, brave warriors?
> Have, then, your sorrowful fancies work'd on you
> To fly us and forsake us? Do ye think
> To leave the virgins of Numantia
> A spoil to arrogant Romans, and your sons,
> Your free-born sons, in bondage to the foe?
> Were it not better that your own right hand
> At once should take the life which ye have given?
> If you are well resolved to attempt the sortie,
> Then take us with you. It will be life to us
> To perish by your sides. Nor will ye thus
> Shorten our way to death, for famine ever
> Threatens to cut the thread of life in twain.

After several of the women have spoken, Theogenes answers their complaints with great tenderness. He swears that they shall not be abandoned by their husbands, but that living or dying they shall still be protected. Lastly, he persuades the Numantians to a still more desperate course, one that will not leave within the walls of Numantia a single relic of their persons or property to adorn the triumph of the enemy. He proposes that in the middle of the great square a pile should be raised, upon which the citizens should themselves cast all their riches, and that to mitigate for a few hours, at least, the hunger which consumes them, the Roman prisoners should be slain, and eaten by the soldiery. The people immediately adopt this frightful resolution.

After the terrible suicidal sacrifice has been made, the Romans perceive the stillness which reigns in Nu-

mantia, Caius Marius mounts upon the wall by a ladder, and is shocked to see the city one lake of blood, and the streets all filled with the dead. Scipio fears that this universal massacre will deprive him of all the honor of a triumph. If a single Numantian captive could be found alive to be chained to his car, that honor would be his; but Caius Marius and Jugurtha, who have traversed all the streets, have met with nothing but gore and corpses. At last, however, they discover Viriatus at the top of a tower. Scipio addresses him, and invites him, with kind words and promises, to deliver himself up. Viriatus rejects his offers with indignation. He is unwilling to survive his country; and after heaping curses upon the Romans, he precipitates himself from the tower, and falls lifeless at the feet of Scipio. Renown, with a trumpet in her hand, terminates the tragedy by promising eternal glory to the Numantians.

The *Numantia* was acted several times in the earlier part of the life of Cervantes, while the nation was still warm with the enthusiasm which the victories of Charles V had produced, and while the reverses which they began to experience under Philip II made them doubly resolute not to stain their ancient glories. We may conceive how deeply the Spaniards must have felt the sentiments of national glory and independence which breathe throughout the drama, and with what animation they must have prepared for new dangers and new sacrifices. We thus see that the theatre, which has been denominated barbarous, did in fact approach much nearer than our own to that of the Greeks, in the influence which it exerted over the people, and in

the power which the poet wielded over his audience. We cannot, however, avoid a feeling of repulsion at the ferocity which pervades the whole drama. The resolution of the Numantians, the details of their situation, the progress of the plot, and the catastrophe, are all terrific. The tragedy does not draw tears, but the shuddering horror which it induces becomes almost a punishment to the spectator.

Life in Algiers.

Life in Algiers has been called a comedy; but neither that title, nor the name of Cervantes, must lead us to expect in this piece the humor which reigns throughout *Don Quixote*. To the gloomy picture which is represented in this drama no relief is afforded either by liveliness of plot or by amusing delineation of character. Cervantes did, indeed, in his interludes, condescend to excite laughter; but the object both of his comedies and of his tragedies was to awaken terror and pity. All his compositions were adapted to excite popular feeling on the topics of politics or religion; to strengthen the pride, the independence or the fanaticism of the Spaniards. His dramas were divided into tragedies and comedies according to the rank of the characters and the dignity of the action, and not from any reference to the liveliness or the gravity of their subjects.

Cervantes, as already stated, had been detained for several years as a captive at Algiers, and his own sufferings and those of his companions had made a deep impression upon him. He returned to Spain with feelings

of violent hatred against the Moors, and with an ardent desire to contribute toward the redemption of those who had fallen into the hands of the Mussulmen. His comedy of *Life in Algiers;* another drama which he published toward the close of his life, and the tale of the captive in *Don Quixote* were not mere literary works, but charitable endeavors to serve those who had been his brothers in distress, and to excite public opinion in their favor. His object was to rouse the nation and the king himself against the Mussulmen, and to preach a crusade for the deliverance of all Christian captives.

To accomplish this end he proposed merely to give to the public a sketch of the life of the captives in Algiers, and a description of the interior of their habitations. He, therefore, employed no dramatic action, no plot and no catastrophe; nor did he pay the least regard to the laws of the unities. He only collected into one point of view the various sufferings, pains and humiliations which were consequent upon slavery amongst the Moors. The truth of the picture, the proximity of the scene, and the immediate interest of the spectators, supplied the want of art, which is visible in this drama, and exerted, it may easily be believed, a powerful influence over the audience.

Life in Algiers contains various adventures, unconnected with one another except in community of suffering. The principal characters are Aurelio and Sylvia, an affectionate pair who are exposed to the solicitations of their mistress and master. The religion and conjugal fidelity of Aurelio having induced him to repress all the

advances of his mistress, Zara, he is at last tempted with enchantments; but the demons soon perceive that they have no power over a Christian. He is then exposed to the seductive influence of Occasion and Necessity, who are personified by the dramatist, and who make various suggestions to the captive, which he at last succeeds in expelling from his mind. At the conclusion of the piece both Aurelio and Sylvia are sent home by the Dey on the promise of a large ransom.

Another captive of the name of Sebastian relates, with extreme indignation, a spectacle of which he had been a witness; the reprisals exercised upon the Christians by the Mussulmen. The conduct of the Moors, however, at which the captive expresses such horror, appears only to have been a just retaliation. A Moor who had been forced to submit to the ceremony of baptism at Valencia, being afterward exiled with his countrymen, had taken up arms against the Christians. Being made prisoner in an engagement, he was recognized as having been baptized, and was delivered over to the Inquisition, who condemned him to be burnt as a relapsed infidel. His relations and friends, eager to avenge him, bought a Valencian captive of the same class of Inquisitors from among whom his judges had been appointed, and inflicted upon him a similar death. If the rigor of such reprisals could have suspended the frightful proceedings of the Inquisition, this attempt to terrify the Spaniards with the consequences of their own barbarity would have been grounded upon good reason. The retaliation in this case did not inflict the punishment of the guilty upon the innocent, for every In-

quisitor was bound to participate in the same crime. The anecdote is founded on fact, and the Inquisitor burnt by the Algerines was the monk Miguel de Aranda.

One of the most affecting scenes in the drama is the slave market. The public crier offers for sale a father and mother and their two children, who are to be sold in separate lots. The resignation of the father, who in this dreadful calamity does not forget to confide in the goodness of God, the tears of the mother, and the childish conviction of the younger captives, that no power upon earth can dispose of them contrary to the will of their parents, form a terrible picture. The merchant who is about to buy one of the children makes him open his mouth, in order that he may see whether he is in good health. The unhappy child, unconscious that it is possible for him to suffer greater griefs than those which he has already experienced, imagines that the merchant is going to extract a decayed tooth, and assuring him that it does not ache, begs him not to pull it out. These little incidents more forcibly describe the horrors of slavery than the most labored eloquence could do. In the child is exhibited a touching ignorance of the destiny which awaits him; in the merchant a cold and calculating interest contrasted with a sensibility which he beholds without any emotion. The merchant, who is in other respects a worthy man, after giving 130 piasters for the youngest of the children, thus addresses him:

Merchant.—**Come hither, child, 'tis time to go to rest.**

Juan.—Seignor, I will not leave my mother here,
To go with any one.

Mother.—Alas! my child, thou art no longer mine,
But his who bought thee.

Juan.—What! then, have you, mother,
Forsaken me?

Mother.—O Heavens! how cruel are ye!

Merchant.—Come, hasten, boy.

Juan.—Will you go with me, brother?

Francisco.—I cannot, Juan, 'tis not in my power,—
May Heaven protect you, Juan!

Mother.—Oh, my child,
My joy and my delight, God won't forget thee!

Juan.—O father! mother! whither will they bear me
Away from you?

Mother.—Permit me, worthy Seignor,
To speak a moment in my infant's ear.
Grant me this small contentment; very soon
I shall know naught but grief.

Merchant.—What you would say,
Say now; to-night is the last time.

Mother.—To-night
Is the first time my heart e'er felt such grief.

Juan.—Pray keep me with you, mother, for I know not
Whither he'd carry me.

Mother.—Alas, poor child!
Fortune forsook thee even at thy birth;
The heavens are overcast, the elements
Are turbid, and the very sea and winds
Are all combin'd against me. Thou, my child,
Know'st not the dark misfortunes into which
Thou art so early plung'd, but happily
Lackest the power to comprehend thy fate.
What I would crave of thee, my life, since I
Must never more be bless'd with seeing thee,
Is that thou never, never wilt forget
To say, as thou wert wont, thy Ave Mary;

For that bright queen of goodness, grace and virtue,
Can loosen all thy bonds and give thee freedom.

Juan.—O mother, mother, may I not remain?
And must these Moors then carry me away?

Mother.—With thee, my child, they rob me of my treasures.

Juan.—Oh, I am much afraid!

Mother.—'Tis I, my child,
Who ought to fear at seeing thee depart.
Thou wilt forget thy God, me, and thyself;
What else can I expect from thee, abandon'd
At such a tender age, amongst a people
Full of deceit and all iniquity?

In the fifth act Juan is introduced as a renegade. He has been seduced by the dainties and rich clothing which his master has given him. He is proud of his turban, and disdains the other captives, saying that it is a sin in a Mussulman to remain in conversation with Christians. Cervantes has inserted a scene between Juan and his mother, who is in despair at his apostasy. The mother, however, does not again appear; her grief must have been too poignant for representation.

The escape of Pedro Alvarez, one of the captives, who, being unable any longer to bear the horrors of slavery, resolves to cross the desert, and endeavor to reach Oran by following the line of the coast, forms another independent plot. He prepares ten pounds of biscuit, made of eggs, flour and honey, and with this stock of provisions and three pairs of shoes he enters upon a journey of sixty leagues, through an unknown country, and over a burning desert infested with wild beasts.

In one scene the captive is introduced consulting with Saavedra, under which name, probably, the dramatist intended to represent himself. In another, we find him in the midst of the desert, where he is wandering after having lost his way; his provisions are exhausted, his clothes are in tatters, his shoes are worn out and he is tormented with hunger, and reduced to such an extreme of weakness that he can with difficulty walk. In this state of distress he invokes the Virgin of Montserrat, and presently a lion appearing crouches down at his feet. The captive finds his strength restored; the lion becomes his guide; he recommences his journey, and when he appears upon the stage the third time, he has nearly arrived at Oran.

Toward the conclusion of the fifth act the arrival of a monk of the order of the Trinity is announced, bearing with him a sum of money for the redemption of the captives. The prisoners throw themselves on their knees in prayer, and the curtain falls, leaving the spectators to conclude that they are all redeemed.

Characteristics of Cervantes' Dramas.

Such are the two dramas which alone remain of the twenty or thirty which were composed by Cervantes in his youth. They are curious specimens of the character which that great genius gave to the national drama of Spain, at a period when it was in his power to model it according to his will. The theatre of the ancients was not unknown to Cervantes, for, in addition to the opportunities he had enjoyed of becoming acquainted with

it in the learned languages, he was very familiar with the Italian, and consequently with the efforts which had been made at the court of Leo X to revive the scenic representations of Greece and Rome. Cervantes, however, thought that the moderns ought to possess a drama which should represent their own manners, opinions and character, and not those of antiquity. He formed, indeed, his idea of tragedy upon the models of the ancients; but that which he beheld was not what we discover in their dramas. The dramatic art appeared to him to be the art of transporting the audience into the midst of events calculated, from their political or religious interest, to make the most profound impression upon the mind; tragedy, the art of making the spectators sharers in the most brilliant historical incidents, and comedy, of introducing them into the houses of individuals, and of laying bare their vices or their virtues. He attached little importance to that which has become a matter of such consequence in our eyes, the space of time which is supposed to elapse between each scene, and the power of transferring the actors from place to place. He paid the greatest attention, on the contrary, to that which we have considered as a defect in the ancient drama, the poetical and religious or lyrical portion, which among the Greeks was the province of the chorus, and which Cervantes wished to reproduce by the aid of allegorical personages.

The two dramas of Cervantes occupy an insulated station in the literature of Spain. We discover not after him any instance of that terrible majesty which

reigns throughout the *Numantia*, of its simplicity of action, its natural dialogue and its truth of sentiment. Lopé de Vega introduced new plays upon the stage, and the public, captivated by the pleasure of pursuing an intrigue through its thousand windings, became disgusted with the representation of powerful and deep emotions, which produced not the effect of surprise. Cervantes himself gave way to the national taste, without satisfying it, in the plays which he published in his declining years, and the Castilian Æschylus may be said to have left us only one real specimen of his dramatic genius.

The Early French Drama.

In France the regular drama sprang directly from the literary movement of the Renaissance. Du Bellay sounded the note of attack which converted that movement in France into an endeavor to transform the national literature; and in Ronsard the classical school of poetry put forward its conquering hero and sovereign law-giver. Among the disciples who gathered round Ronsard, and who with him formed, about the middle of the sixteenth century, the "Pleiad" of French literature, Stephen Jodelle, the reformer of the French theatre, held a distinguished place. The stage of this period left ample room for the enterprise of this youthful writer. The popularity of the old entertainments had reached its height when Louis XII, in his conflict with Pope Julius II, had not scrupled to call in the aid of Pierre Gregoire (Gringore), and when the *Mère Sotte* had

mockingly masqueraded in the petticoats of Holy Church. Under Francis I the Inquisition had to some extent succeeded in repressing the audacity of the actors, whose follies were at the same time an utter abomination in the eyes of the Huguenots. For a time the very Mysteries had been prohibited. Meanwhile, isolated translations of Italian or classical dramas had, in literature, begun the movement which Jodelle now transferred to the stage itself. His tragedy, *Cleopatre Captive,* was produced in 1552, on the same day as his comedy, *L'Eugène;* his *Didon se Sacrifiant* followed in 1558. Thus, at a time when a national theatre was perhaps impossible in a country distracted by civil and religious conflicts, whose monarchy had not yet welded together a number of provinces attached each to its own traditions, and whose population, especially in the capital, was enervated by frivolity or enslaved by fanaticism, was born that long-lived artificial growth, the so-called classical tragedy of France. Comedy, on the other hand, though subjected to the same influences as tragedy, had a national basis upon which to proceed, and its history is partly that of a modification of old popular forms.

The history of French tragedy begins with the *Cleopatre Captive,* in the representation of which the author, together with other members of the "Pleiad," took part. It is a tragedy in the manner of Seneca, devoid of action and provided with a ghost and a chorus. Though mainly written in the five-foot iambic couplet, it contains passages in the Alexandrine metre, which, soon afterward, La Peruse used in his *Médée,* and

Jodelle in his *Didon*. Numerous tragedies followed in the same style by various authors, among whom Bounyn produced the first regular tragedy on a subject neither Greek nor Roman, and the brothers De la Taille and J. Grevin distinguished themselves by their style. Though in the reign of Charles IX a vain attempt was made by Filleul to introduce the pastoral style of the Italians into French tragedy, while the Brotherhood of the Passion was intermingling with pastoral plays the expiring efforts of the religious drama, the classical school, in spite of all difficulties, prevailed. Monchrestien exhibited unusual vigor of rhetoric, and in R. Garnier French tragedy reached the greatest height in nobility and dignity of style, as well as in the exhibition of dramatic power, to which it attained before Corneille. In his tragedies choruses are still interspersed among the lengthy Alexandrine tirades of the dialogue.

During this period, comedy had likewise been influenced by classical models; but the distance was less between the national farces and Terence than between the Mysteries or Moralities and Seneca or the Greeks. *L'Eugène* differs little in style from the more elaborate of the old farces; and while it satirizes the foibles of the clergy without any appreciable abatement of the old license, its theme is the favorite burden of the French comic theatre of all times—*le cocuage*. The examples, however, which directly facilitated the productiveness of the French comic dramatists of this period, among whom Jean de la Taille was the first to attempt a regular comedy in prose, were those of the Italian stage, which in 1576 established a permanent

colony in France. This survived until the close of the seventeenth century, by which time it had adopted the French language and was ready to coalesce with French actors, without, however, relinquishing all remembrance of its origin. R. Belleau, a member of the "Pleiad," produced a comedy in which appears the type, already approached by Jodelle, of the swaggering captain; Grevin copied Italian intrigue, characters and manners; O. de Turnebe borrowed the title of one Italian play and perhaps parts of the plots of others; the Florentine F. d'Amboise produced versions of two Italian comedies; and the foremost French comic poet of the century, P. de Larivey, likewise an Italian born, openly professed to imitate the poets of his native country. His plays are more or less literal translations of Dolce, Secchi and other Italian dramatists, and this lively and witty author, to whom Molière owes much, thus connects two of the most important and successful growths of the modern comic drama.

The troubles of the great civil and religious wars of the sixteenth century had in certain spheres of society produced a reaction toward culture and refinement; and the seal had been set upon the results of the Renaissance by Malherbe, the father of the French style. The people sought to solace or distract its weariness and its sufferings with the help of the ministers of that half-cynical gayety which has always lighted up the darkest hours of French popular life. In the troublous days preceding Richelieu's accession to power the *Tabarinades*—a kind of street dialogue recalling the earliest days of the popular drama—had made the Pont-Neuf

the favorite theatre of the Parisian populace. Meanwhile, the influence of Spain, which Henry IV had overcome in politics, had, throughout his reign and afterward, been predominant in other spheres, and not the least in literature. Much of the French drama of this age is of the same kind as its romance literature, and like it, fell under the castigation of Boileau's satire. Heroic love, "fertile in tender sentiments," took possession of the theatre as well as of the romance; and Calprenède, G. de Scudéry, and others were equally fashionable in either. Meanwhile, Spanish and Italian models continued to influence both branches of the drama. Everybody knew by heart Gongora's version of the story of "young Pyramus and his love Thisbe," as dramatized by Viaud, and the sentiment of Tristan became a power on the stage, and drew tears from Cardinal Richelieu in the audience. Even Duryer's style, otherwise superior to that of his contemporaries, is stated to have been Italian in its defects. A mixture of the forms of classical comedy with elements of the Spanish and Italian pastoral was attempted with great success by Hardi, a playwright who thanked heaven that he knew the precepts of his art while preferring to follow the demands of his trade. The same admixture was adopted by Racan, Rotrou and others; and among comedies of intrigue in the Spanish fashion are included the earliest efforts of Corneille. The year 1636 is famous for an event which marks an epoch in the history of the French drama, and that is the appearance of Corneille's *Cid;* for now a new star had risen above the horizon, the first of the three great writers of the

French drama, who, with Racine and Molière, may be compared with the famous classic triad of the Greeks.

The English Renaissance.

In England the dawning of the Renaissance begins with the age of Wycliffe and Chaucer. By the death of the former, in 1384, the world lost one of the most sturdy heroes that the fruitful soil of England ever bore, though the great reformers of the sixteenth century throw his figure somewhat into the shade. Wycliffe does not possess the genial vein of a Luther nor the stern greatness of a Calvin. He does not rouse our enthusiasm like the former, nor impress us with fearful admiration like the latter, but he unites many of their excellencies, though he possesses them in less degree. Apart from his work as a reformer, literature owes to him an incalculable debt. He gave to it, indeed, no single work of art, but he gave new ideas and a multitude of stimulating influences. Yet, while a great thinker, he was in no sense of the word a literary artist; for he was too much filled with his subject to care greatly for the form. Of the stiffness of his style his own Bible is full of examples. The Bible which bears his name, however, was really the work of John Purvey, who, at first under Wycliffe's direction, undertook a revision of the Scriptures, and completed it four years after the master's death. This revision is, in truth, a new work, in which not only the errors of the original version are corrected, but the Latinisms in which it abounded are replaced by plain English. In this new

form the so-called Bible of Wycliffe penetrated among all classes of the people, and even during the bloody persecutions of the Wycliffites continued its quiet mission almost without interruption.

At the time when the conflict between Church and State was most violent, and when Wycliffe was beginning to draw upon himself the eyes of patriots, there was considerable talk at the English court about a young man named Geoffrey Chaucer, who belonged to the king's household, and who, both by his personality and his connections, enjoyed the favor of the royal family. He was of a pleasant and attractive disposition, remarkable by the thoughtful, dreamy expression of his face, by a certain tendency to stoutness, which did not, however, develop till later years, and by his susceptibility to love; he was, besides, a pleasant companion, obliging and modest, happy and good-tempered, but frequently taciturn. Occasionally, however, he could show a tendency to roguishness and create astonishment by his superior humor. He was a passionate friend of books, and often passed half the night reading in bed. On many occasions, even thus early, he had appeared as a miracle of learning to those about him—he read Latin as easily as French; he spoke a more select English than others, and it was known that he had composed many beautiful English verses.

The young poet belonged to a well-to-do middle-class family which had many far-reaching connections, and even some influence with the court. The poet thus found early opportunities of catching a glimpse of the great world, and of observing the higher ranks of

society. Even as a boy he may have heard his father, John Chaucer, the vintner of Thames street, London, telling of the marvelous voyage he had made to Antwerp and Cologne in the brilliant suite of Edward III, in 1338. When a youth of sixteen or seventeen, Geoffrey served as a page or squire to Elizabeth, duchess of Ulster, first wife of Lionel, duke of Clarence, and daughter-in-law of the king. He bore arms when about nineteen years of age, and went to France in 1359, in the army commanded by Edward III. The campaign, which was ended by the treaty of Bretigny, was not, indeed, distinguished either by its exploits or its results, but it was, nevertheless, eventful enough for the young warrior, and presented to the eyes of the rising poet a rich profusion of motley, living pictures. He saw a grand display of warriors and knightly pomp; the foremost generals of the age—the king, Henry, duke of Lancaster, above all the Black Prince—at the head of their troops; marches and countermarches through the provinces of northern France; the ancient, regal town of Rheims besieged with desperate energy and finally abandoned, unsubdued; numerous smaller expeditions, skirmishes and plundering raids, and, in the intervals, hawking and hunting and other feudal sports; and finally, personal dangers to the poet himself, who was taken prisoner by the French, though the king soon had him ransomed. For an English poet of that period Chaucer had seen and experienced, even in his early years, more than any of his brethren of the craft.

This epoch formed a sort of Indian summer to the age of chivalry, and its spirit found expression in great

deeds of war as well as in the festivals and manners of the court. The ideal which men strove to realize did not quite correspond to the spirit of the former age. On the whole, people had become more worldly and practical, and were generally anxious to protect the real interests of life from the unwarranted interference of romantic aspirations. The spirit of chivalry no longer formed a fundamental element, but only an ornament of life—an ornament, indeed, which was made much of, and which was looked upon with a sentiment partaking of enthusiasm. But now, when devotion to chivalry was no longer the simple outflow of a dominant idea, but rather the product of a pleasant self-conscious reflection, the life and doings of aristocratic society took a very mixed color and a character hard to be defined. Minds ideally constituted strove to fill the traditional molds and formulas with a really ethical substance, and by trying in their own way to transpose these ancient forms into action, developed a really tender and humane disposition. The majority of the people rejoiced merely in the splendor and in the festive, dignified existence that raised them above the commonplace and distinguished them from the vulgar crowd. But in every case there was the intermixture of an incongruous element. The real cavaliers of that age remind us somewhat of Don Quixote, sometimes uniting with a maidenly coyness and modesty the most overmastering desire for battles and adventures, which impelled them over all the world, sometimes thwarting the calculations of a prudent policy by the momentary outbreak of an overstrained sentiment.

In its external appearance and surroundings the aristocratic society of the time also makes a somewhat fantastic impression. With extraordinary stateliness society shows its delight in excessive luxury and overloaded ornamentation. In the dignified and imposing architecture of the age ornamentation frequently plays too large a part. Brilliant tapestry hangings, wall pictures, colored windows surprise us more by their gorgeousness than by their harmony. In forestry and horticulture trees are allowed to grow to their full development, but effects are produced more by a symmetrical arrangement of the groups and individuals and by luxuriant masses of rich foliage than by picturesque variety. In the dress of the higher classes we remark a growing preference for striking and variegated colors, length and width being arbitrarily decided by fashion.

In the midst of this outside world of motley pomp and throbbing life Geoffrey could observe the doings of high and low in various situations. He was early initiated into court intrigues, and even into many political secrets, and found opportunities of studying the human type in numerous individuals and according to the varieties developed by rank in life, education, age and sex. The young poet must have been especially interested by the current forms of intercourse between man and woman, and with his early developed sensuousness and easily excited imagination, which we can certainly attribute to him even then, we may well believe that in this domain he remained no idle spectator.

Lady worship was quite as common in that age as it had been before in the ruling principles of chivalry.

The French erotic poetry had developed a strict code of the duties which husband owed to wife and lover to mistress. In these duties mediæval ideas were seen mixed up with the influence of the old Roman poetry, and especially with the love lore of the experienced Ovid. But the further the idealistic views—which at first underlay the principles of woman worship—disappeared from life, the more extravagant became the forms which that worship assumed, at least in the effusions and precepts of poets; and to this extravagant adoration occasional outbursts of sarcasm and cynicism formed no refreshing contrast. Chivalrous society in England was much less affected than in France with the prevailing tendency which contained such glaring contradictions. Yet, even in the court circles in England could be seen that mixture of a refined gallantry and a rude sensuality, of an artificial and unnatural enthusiasm, which often becomes a sort of mockery, and a realism which verges on the vulgar.

The literature which not only illustrates this mental and moral condition, but also helped to bring it about, begins with the *Romance of the Rose*—that singular and marvelous poem, which, in its two very dissimilar parts, is typical, in more ways than one, of the culture of the vanishing middle ages. Taken all in all, this work of Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung was still the most celebrated and best-known book in the French language in the time of Edward III. All the standard French poets of the age were under the influence of one or other of these two poets, or even of both, in so far as they continued to ornament their

poems with mythological and allegorical figures, and in so far as they rarely expressed their feelings, either in epic or lyric poetry, without the intermixture of subtle reflections and an abundant but rather cheap display of learning. The most eminent of the court poets of that period was unquestionably the aged, but still vigorous, Guillaume de Machault, who, in numerous poems, and often in very artistic rhymes, knew how to vary the great theme of love with spirit and frequently with grace. In his whole tendency he reminds us more of Guillaume de Lorris than of Jean de Meung.

In poetry and life, fashion required an educated young man, especially one in the service of the court, to fall in love at the earliest opportunity, and, if possible, hopelessly. Geoffrey cannot have failed to satisfy this demand of high society. In his youth he certainly lost his heart more than once. The vivid traits in the character of a coquette, whom he describes in the earliest of his extant poems, are assuredly not taken from mere observation, but from the most intimate personal experience. And the ideal womanhood which hovers before his mind in the same poem has unquestionably many points of resemblance to a definite earthly personage by whom the young poet's heart and eye had been ensnared. A great passion, which affected the poet for several years in that decisive period between youth and manhood, has left its distant traces in several of his works. The object of this passion is now unknown. Presumably, the lady-love of the young enthusiast was far above him in position and rank, even after his promotion to the rank of a royal scutifer or

armiger, the highest among the minor appointments at the court. At any rate, Geoffrey found out that his first love was hopeless—but he could not tear the image from his heart. The passion must have had deep and lasting effects upon his disposition and on the development of his talents; and this experience, if it did not first kindle his poetry, at least directed it in its destined course.

Nothing has been preserved from his early writings. In the numerous erotic poems of this period, which have been destroyed by an unpropitious fate, in the songs, ditties, lays, roundels, virelays, Chaucer, no doubt, took as his models the French love-poets, and without much difficulty or endeavor he probably surpassed them in simplicity of form and expression. But the fact is very remarkable that from the first, or at least from a very early period, Chaucer wrote in the English language—however natural this may seem to succeeding generations in "The Father of English Poetry."

Chaucer's youthful attempts in erotic lyrics, as we afterward learn from the testimony of Gower, met with great applause and gradually obtained a wide circulation. A sad event now gave the poet the melancholy occasion for a work of greater art. On September 12th, 1369, died the Duchess Blanche, heiress of Henry, duke of Lancaster, and wife of Prince John of Gaunt, who received with her his investiture to the duchy of Lancaster. This lovely lady, carried off in the flower of her life, had been by her beauty and virtue the chief ornament of the English court. All were in the deep-

est mourning. But it was the special province of the poet to eternize the image of the departed, and to reconcile the pain by glorifying the memories it invoked. The poet may also have been influenced on that occasion by the desire of becoming more intimately acquainted with the duke of Lancaster, who was about his own age, and who, in his many-sided interests, may have previously observed the rising poet's powers. Thus originated the poem on the *Deeth of Blaunche the Duchesse*, better known as *The Book of the Duchess.*

In this poem Chaucer had a double task: he had to celebrate the excellencies of Blanche and to depict the sorrow of her mourning lord. With these there was a third essential, of a purely personal kind; the nature of the poem itself must be such as to confirm or anticipate the intimacy beginning, or desired by the poet, between himself and the duke. He represents himself as meeting with the duke, who makes him the confidant of his love and grief. He does not, of course, give us either the name or title of the duke, but introduces him under a slight disguise in a romantic neighborhood, viz., as an unknown knight, who meets the poet in the loneliness of the forest, and whose despairing grief excites the deepest sympathy. The apparent age of the unknown knight does not correspond to that of the duke. His discourses contain no direct reference to well-known persons or events; we learn only the name of the beloved lady, "and goode Faire White she heet." It is not expressly stated, although plainly hinted, that the beloved was also the spouse. But the whole interview is represented as taking place in a dream, and many

references and situations cannot be clearly understood on account of their dreamy indefiniteness.

The poet has at first considerable trouble in inducing the knight to speak. But when the ice is once broken, he shows a great desire to communicate; it is the knight who does nearly all the talking; he becomes excessively loquacious in his descriptions and also in his complaints and invectives. He states very few real facts, but numerous phrases, learned allusions and subtle distinctions. A multitude of ideas and images, which were very common in French literature since the *Romance of the Rose,* appear here for the first time in an English dress—such as reminiscences from classical antiquity or even from the Old Testament, long spun-out allegories, witty and uncouth touches from the wisdom of the mediæval school-men. However much the mind may be distracted by all this learning, parenthetically introduced, we nevertheless frequently hear the voice of real passion from the strange figure, and in some passages of the knight's discourse—as in his invectives against Fortune, or in his complaints, given in antithetic form—the student of Shakespeare is reminded of the great bard's earlier works, especially Romeo and Juliet. The whole dialogue, especially at the commencement, is carried through by means of little touches, which have the effect of retarding the progress; not, indeed, in the way such touches are employed in the epic for the attainment of its beautifully proportioned fullness, but as they are employed in the drama—to enliven the whole development as well as the separate scenes, to unfold the characters, and to work out the motives. Thus

early, in the *Book of the Duchess*, we see Chaucer's dramatic tendency. With him the dialogue becomes a kind of dramatic scene; although, indeed, the length of many of the speeches, with their repeated digressions into the domain of general knowledge, is by no means dramatic. But Chaucer, like the true dramatist, sees the speakers vividly before him, and has in his mind's eye the facial expression which accompanies every word they utter. That which we see developed into the highest art in his later poems is thus present in germ in this work of his youth. Besides the long dialogue, the *Book of the Duchess* really contains two other parts—an overture, and before that a prologue.

The overture—if we may use the expression—consists of a series of pictures which pass before the sleeping poet in agreeable succession, and lead up to the dialogue: a bright May morning; awaking in a chamber with beautifully painted windows; sweet singing of birds, with which other tones are soon interblended; the exciting picture of a hunt with a description of the breezy freshness of the forest; and, within this forest, the transition from noisy life to the deepest solitude. In these descriptions we find reminiscences and even borrowings from the *Romance of the Rose* and similar poems closely interwoven with the poet's own vivid ideas and his expressions of a deep sympathy with nature.

The prologue is very attractive and important, and its length exceeds the usual proportions. Its principal motives are borrowed by Chaucer from the *Dit de Morpheus* by Guillaume de Machault; and indeed the in-

fluence of this French poet is very clearly traceable throughout the whole *Book of the Duchess*, as well as in its individual parts. But even in the prologue, where this influence is most evident, the freedom and independence of the English poet is just as clearly evident. What Chaucer borrows he makes really his own, and brings it into a new connection, suited to the higher purposes of his own poetry.

At the beginning Chaucer pictures to us his peculiar condition. For a long time he has been suffering from sleeplessness; this brought on the feeling, very similar to dizziness, which oppresses him. We are only left to conjecture that this condition was brought about by his unfortunate love affair. The poet describes it as a disease that he has suffered eight years, without being a whit nearer his recovery: "for there is but one physician that can heal me—but that is gone! What is not to be, must needs be left." Lying in bed one sleepless night, he reads a book of various contents; further on we learn that this was *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, the favorite work of his youth, and, indeed, also of his later years.

Summary and Conclusion.

The wealth of the period covered by the later Renaissance makes the task of giving the results of a survey of its manifold activities one of extreme difficulty. It is, indeed, sufficiently easy to point out the common element of the time, namely, the revival or the development of the literary genius of Spain, England and France, under the influence of the classic models and

of Italy. In Italy itself the classic impulse had been felt earlier and had borne its best fruits before the middle of the sixteenth century. The time there was one of decadence. Tasso and Giordano Bruno are unquestionably, though in widely different ways, writers of original force. But the author of *Jerusalem Delivered* was a survivor—one, too, who had lived into an unhappy time. His weakness of health and character may have—or rather must have—made him suffer with exaggerated acuteness from the forces which were weighing on the intellect of Italy. Yet on that very account he shows only the more clearly the exhaustion of the race and the deadening influence of the Roman Catholic revival.

As for Bruno, interesting, and in a way attractive, as he is, it is doubtful whether he can be said to have had any literary influence at all. His modern fame is even not quite legitimate, since he owes it in some measure to the circumstances of his death. In his own age he fell rapidly into obscurity. He also had lived into an unhappy time, though he bore himself in it very differently from Tasso. Too Italian to reconcile himself to Calvinism or Lutheranism, too independent in mind to be an obedient son of the Church, from the moment he was asked for more than mere outward conformity to ceremonies, he was destined to be crushed between hammer and anvil in an age of religious strife. There was no room for independence of mind in Italy, and there was to be none for long, as the lives of Galileo and of Fra Paolo Sarpi were to show. It required all the power and the strong political anti-papal spirit of

Venice to preserve Fra Paolo. In literature nothing was any longer quite safe except the more or less elegant presentment of harmless matter. Tasso did the utmost which it was now allowed an Italian poet to achieve. Beyond him there could only be mere echo, as in the case of Guarini. Beyond Guarini the downward path of Italian literature led only to the preciosities and affectations of Marini.

The difficulty of summing up and defining becomes really sensible when an attempt is made to estimate the different ways and the different degrees in which the influence of the Renaissance made itself felt in Spain, England and France. In all three countries it met a strong national genius which it could stimulate, but could not affect in essentials. Garcilaso, Spenser and Ronsard were all equally intent on making a new poetry for their countries, and all three succeeded. Yet they remained respectively a Spaniard, an Englishman and a Frenchman, and in their works were as unlike one another as they were to their common models.

It is, perhaps, fairly accurate to say that the Renaissance influenced each of the three Western countries with increasing force in the order in which they are named. Spain felt it least and France most. When we wish to measure the influence which one literature has had on another, it is surely very necessary to keep the form and the spirit well apart. When only the bulk of what was written, and the bare form and the mere language are allowed for, then it is obvious that the Renaissance did affect Spain very much. The hendecasyllabic, the prevailing use of the double rhyme, the

ottava rima, the capitolo and the canzone were all taken by the Spaniards with slavish fidelity. The very close connection between the languages and the people may have made this minute imitation inevitable. Again, it is not to be denied that Italian had a marked influence on literary Castilian as it was written in the later sixteenth century. Very strict critics have noted the presence of Italian constructions in Cervantes, but the point is one on which no one cares to speak as having authority, and for two reasons. Experience only increases our sense of the danger of expressing opinions as to what is legitimate in a language which is not one's own—and even in one which is. Then, too, before a new phrase is condemned for being foreign we have to settle the preliminary questions, Was it taken from a sister tongue or not? Was it superfluous or not? For instance, the Spaniard who wishes to say, "Of two things the one," and who uses the words "De dos cosas, una," is guilty of a Gallicism, and is wrong, because his own Castilian supplies him with the terser and equally lucid formula, "De dos, una." Yet the French original might have been taken with profit, and very legitimately, if it had been wanted, since it comes from a kindred tongue, and does no violence to the genius of Spanish.

While noting that Italian models were profusely imitated in Spain and Portugal, and that Castilian was perfected as a literary instrument by Italian influence, we can still maintain that the Renaissance bore less fruit in the Peninsula than in France or England. By "fruit" is not meant mere writing, be its mechanical dexterity what it may, but that combination of form

and matter which makes literature, and which before we can call it "national" must savor of the qualities of some one race. Now, when we look at the literary activity of the Peninsula during the golden age, we can find very little which will stand the triple test in matter, form and national character, and of which we can yet say that it shows the spirit of the Renaissance. Portugal can be left aside with a passing salute to the great name, and the real, though hardly proportionate, merit of Camoens. What else we find there is little more than a somewhat weaker version of the learned poetry of Spain, of which it has to be said that it might be deducted without reducing the place of Spanish literature in the world. All men who have written well are entitled to their honor. The Spaniards were skillful workmen, and that, too, in no mean matter. Yet there is a wide difference between the man of whom we can say that if he had never taken pen in hand, his form and his matter might yet be found in equal perfection elsewhere and in foreign tongues, and that other man of whom we are bound to say that if he had remained silent then something would have been missing which no other race could have supplied. Now, if Boscan had never taken the advice of Navagiero, if Garcilaso had never written, if all the learned poets had remained silent, then Spain would not have shown her capacity to produce men who could handle Italian metres competently—and yet her place in the literature of the world would be essentially what it is. The *Celestina*, from which, through the *Novela de Picaros*, came Le Sage and Smollett and Dickens, would remain, and so would

the *Amadis of Gaul*, the romances, the comedia, *Don Quixote*, the great adventures, and Santa Teresa—all, in short, that makes Spanish literature.

Allowing that there was something Spanish which found adequate expression in the golden age, and is also the best of the national literature, there comes the difficulty of finding a definition of that something. To say that there is Spanish quality in las cosas de España, and that this is why they are Spanish, is the explanation of Molière's doctors. Again, it is mere reasoning in a circle to begin by taking it for granted that the learned poets who copied the Italian forms were not truly Spanish, and that therefore Spain was not in essentials influenced by the Renaissance. Either form of absurdity is to be avoided. Perhaps the only way of escape lies in defining what we mean by the spirit of the Renaissance. Without professing to be equal to so great a task, it is permissible to assert that there are certain notes which we describe as of the Renaissance, and to which the Italian, the Frenchman or the Englishman gave expression in forms proper to himself. A love of beauty, a sense of joy, a vehement longing for strong expressions of individual character and of passion, a delight in the exercise of a bold, inquisitive intellect—all these, and the reaction from them, which is a deep melancholy, are the notes of the Renaissance. In the learned poetry of Spain they are rarely heard. The commonplaces of form, with here and there a piety and patriotism which are mediæval and Spanish, are given in their stead. Therefore it is fair to say that the Spaniard was not greatly influenced by the Renaissance

—that there was something in it not congenial to him.

There remains the difficulty of saying exactly what is the Spanish quality of the true cosas de España. Ford, an accepted authority on Spanish literature, who knew the flavor well, gave it a name—the borracha—which, being interpreted, is the wine-skin and the smack it lends to the juice of the grape. The Spaniards say that there are three natural perfumes, and the first of them is the smell of the dry earth after rain. The borracha, and the pungent scent of the "dura tellus Iberiæ" when wet, are not to everybody's taste. Neither is their equivalent in literature, except where we find it purified and humanized by the genius of Cervantes.

In Spain, then, the Renaissance met something on which it could secure no certain hold, something in a sense barbarous, not quite European, and recalcitrant to all classic influences. In England it met a strong national genius, but not one which was entirely alien. Sidney, Spenser and Marlowe showed the influence of the Renaissance, not as mere imitators of forms, but as Englishmen, and showed it fully. In Shakespeare it was included with much more. The Spaniard either copied the mere form or produced what one feels would have come as a natural growth from the middle ages, the *Libro de Caballerías,* the *Novela de Picaros,* the *Auto Sacramental,* and even the comedia, in which no trace of the classic influence is to be seen. A drama which is in no sense classic might have developed from the Morality and the farce. As much might be said

of the form of the English drama. Seneca might have been forgotten, and Tansillo might never have written, as far as the construction of the English play is concerned. But then much of the Renaissance spirit did pass into Elizabethan literature. We could not deduct what it shared with Italy without fatal loss. The genius of Spenser could, perhaps, have dispensed with a teacher, but as a matter of fact it did not. With no model save Chaucer he would yet have been one of the greatest of poets. He would not have been exactly the poet he was without Ariosto, Tasso and Du Bellay.

Shakespeare had, of all men, the least need to borrow, and yet, without the influence of the Renaissance, we should not have the *Sonnets*, *Venus and Adonis*, *The Rape of Lucrece*, or many passages in the plays. The English genius, in fact, accepted and absorbed the Renaissance without losing its native independence. All the manifestations of its freedom were not equally admirable. The wild incoherence of the early dramatists is not good in itself. When we see it at its worst, we are half tempted to wish that Greene and Marlowe had been more subservient. Yet it was good in so far as it was a striving after a national ideal. It was the necessary preparation for Shakespeare and the great things of the Elizabethan drama.

In conclusion it may be said that, while the first period of the English Renaissance was one of imitation and assimilation, it early freed itself from the pseudo-classic mannerism which passed for good taste in Italy, Spain and France. This was, in fact, accomplished in the Elizabethan epoch, whose drama is the real exponent

of the English Renaissance. Depicting feudalism in the vivid colors of an age at war with feudal institutions, breathing into antique histories the breath of actual life, embracing the romance of Italy and Spain, the mysteries of German legend, the fictions of poetic fancy, the facts of daily existence, the humors of the moment and the abstractions of philosophy in one homogeneous product, full of intense vitality, this wondrous birth of the age, with Shakespeare as the master of all ages, left a monument of the Renaissance unrivalled for pure creative power.

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST.

FROM THE SPANISH OF CALDERON.

(*Translated by Denis Florence Mac-Carthy U.R.I.A.*)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE KING BELSHAZZAR.

DANIEL.

IDOLATRY.

VANITY.

THE THOUGHT.

DEATH.

THE EQUESTRIAN STATUE.

MUSICIANS.

SCENE—THE GARDEN OF BELSHAZZAR'S PALACE.

Belshazzar's Feast.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Enter The Thought, dressed in a coat of many colors, as The Fool, and after him Daniel, detaining him.

Daniel.—Stay!

Thought.— Why stay? the road is free.

Dan.—Stop!

Tho.— Why stop? the coast is clear.

Dan.—Hear me!

Tho.— I don't want to hear.

Dan.—See though——

Tho.— I don't want to see.

Dan.—Who before, in words like these,
Questioned thus, has thus replied?

Tho.—I, for I, by rules untied,
I alone say what I please.

Dan.—Say, who art thou?

Tho.—Thy not knowing
This offends me, I confess:—
Tells it not to thee this dress
With a thousand colors glowing,
Like the many-hued emission
The chameleon's skin gives out,
Leaving its true shade in doubt?
Hear, then, this, my definition:—
I am of those attributes
In which deathless being prideth;

I that light am which divideth
Man's high nature from the brute's.
I am that first crucible,
In which fortune's worth is tested—
Swift as sunlight unarrested—
Than the moon more mutable:—
I have no fixed place wherein
To be born, or live, or die.—
On I move, yet know not I
Where to end or to begin.
Fate, how dark or bright it be,
Ever at its side beholds me;
Every human brain enfolds me,
Man's and woman's—none are free.
I am in the king his care,
When he plans his kingdom's weal;
I am vigilance and zeal,
When his favorite's toils I share.
I am guilt's sure punishment,
Self-reproach in the offender;
I am craft in the pretender,
Foresight in the provident.
In the lady, I am beauty;
In the lover, his romance;
In the gambler, hope of chance;
In the gallant soldier, duty;
In the miser, money-madness;
In the wretch, his life's long dearth;
In the joyful, I am mirth;
And in the sorrowful, am sadness;—
And, in fine, thus strangely wrought,
Restless, rapid, on I fly,
Nothing, everything am I,
Since I am the Human Thought.
See, if such strange changes give
Thee, O Man, true views about me,
Since the thing that lives without me,
Scarcely can be said to live.
This I am for each and all,
But to-day I am assigned

To the King Belshazzar's mind—
He for whom the world's too small.
Though in fool's clothes dressed completely,
I am not sole fool; and why?
Just because in public, I
Try my best to act discreetly.
Since a fool 'twere hard to find
More incurable than he
Who would do, or say, or be
What he thought within his mind.—
Thus few wear the fool's-cap feather,
Although most that badge might win,
For, when looked at from within,
We are madmen all together—
Fools of the same kith and kin.
And, in fine, I, being a fool,
Did not like to stop and pause
Here to speak with thee, because
It would outrage every rule,
That we two were joined, and trod
On together, badly mated;
For if "Daniel," when translated,
Meaneth Wisdom as of God,
It were difficult to try
To keep up a conversation,
We being in our separate station,
Wisdom thou, and Folly I.

Dan.—Yet to-day I know no rules
That forbid our casual speaking,
Thou the way of the wise man seeking—
I not stooping to the fool's:
For, although the distance be
Great 'twixt wise and witless words,
Still 'tis from two different chords
Springs the sweetest harmony.

Tho.—Well, I'll answer with decision,
And get over my confusion,
Since it is a right conclusion
Thought should tell the Prophet's vision.

Dan.—Say what pleasure, deeply drawn,
Art thou now in spirit drinking?

Tho.—Of the bridal I am thinking,
Which, to-day, all Babylon
Celebrates with festive roar.

Dan.—Now the bridegroom's name declare.

Tho.—King Belshazzar, son and heir
Of Nabuchadónosór,
Heir of pride, by pride increased:—

Dan.—Who is, then, the happy bride?

Tho.—She who rules the Orient wide—
The fair Empress of the East,
Cradle of day's infancy.

Dan.—An idolatress, is she?

Tho.— Yes,
And so great an idolatress
She is herself Idolatry.

Dan.—Is he not, in marriage vows,
Wed already to a wife,
In the vanity of life?

Tho.—Yes; but then his law allows
Two, or even a thousand wives;
And, though wed to Vanity,
Now for Paganism he,
With imperious passion, strives,
Daniel, or "God's Wisdom," names
(For the two are one) to thee
Given by Scripture.

Dan.— Woe is me!

Tho.—Would you wed yourself the dames
That you thus take on you so? (Aside.)
This to tell was wrong, I see.

Dan.—Woe! God's people! woe to thee!
Woe! unhappy kingdom, woe!

Tho.—If the truth were told, thy deepest
Pain is now the contemplating
The great bride-feast celebrating,

While a captive here thou weepest.
This it is that saddens thee;
For if he had chanced to wed
With the Jewish rite instead,
Thou wouldst be redeemed and free;—
(Clarions are heard.)
Hark! the distant music sounds;
Now I pass to other things;
Babylon with rapture rings,
Every heart with joy rebounds,
Welcoming, with jubilee,
The new Wife-Queen. Let us go.

Dan.—Woe! unhappy kingdom, woe!
Woe! God's people! woe to thee! (They retire.)

SCENE THE SECOND.

Peal of trumpets. Enter Belshazzar and Vanity at one side, and Idolatry, fantastically dressed, at the other, with Attendants, Followers, etc.

Belshazzar.—Crown thy fair forehead at this feast
With all the dazzling splendor of the East,
If for so bright a diadem
The sun itself is not too dull a gem.
Beauteous Idolatry,
Queen of my kingdom, dearer queen to me,
Thrice welcome be the hour
That thou to Babylon's imperial bower
Hast come; where, o'er thy royal head,
My greatness a fit canopy shall spread—
Presenting at thy feet
The noblest statues, the most rare conceit,
By sculptor ever wrought for man to adore,
Which, with whole holocausts from every shore,
Their fealty shall pay
In gold, in silver, bronze, and stone, and clay.

Idolatry.—Great King of Babylon,
Generous Belshazzar, earth's most potent son,
Whose sacred name sublime

Defeats oblivion and defieth time,
Because its Hebrew sense
Translated, means a hidden and immense
Unfailing treasure; She—the happy She—
Empress of Day's fair house—Idolatry,
Queen of the Orient clime,
Where the young sun, resplendent and sublime,
Receives the homage first of wondering eyes—
Himself the primal source of wonder and surprise—
She to thy kingdom comes to-day—
By right she to thy altars finds her way,
Because, when from the Flood's abysmal throes,
The World, like some great swimmer, struggling rose,
Here in this kingdom, here,
First polity arose, and codes severe,
And laws commanding and remitting things—
The human fond idolatry of kings;
Then followed after the divine,
With gods and votive flames at every shrine.
Thus Nimrod was adored;
Thus Moloch, 'mid the fires that round him roared.
Nor undeserved such heights of honor deem—
Nimrod for king was held, Moloch for god supreme.
Then followed after (a stupendous sight!)
As many idols as to-day unite
These bridal-rites auspicious to attend,
For here with offerings strange, that clash or blend,
Full thirty thousand barbarous gods behold,
In clay, in stone, in bronze, in silver, and in gold.

Tho.—(In the background, aside to Daniel.) Could Thought himself a happier life invent?
What! thirty thousand gods all different!
Man need not fear to ask whate'er he choose,
One god will grant what other gods refuse.—
And thou, O Judah's Son!
What canst thou hope to gain from only One
I tremble but to think of or to name?
How can one god hear each particular claim
Among so many?

Dan.—(Aside to Thought.) He alone can hear;
His hand it is that holds the universe, far and near.

Bel.—(To Idolatry.) Speak to fair Vanity, until this morn
My only bride; and since you both were born
Of one idea, my ambitious duty
Is to unite you thus: What loveliness! What beauty!
(He looks from one to the other, standing between them.)

Idol.—Let me embrace thee, haughty Vanity.

Vanity.—Eternal must such sweet embracements be.

Idol.—Beauty like thine would pierce my heart like steel,
If the divine could aught of envy feel.

Van.—Splendor like thine would turn my heart to stone,
If jealousy were a thing to Vanity known.

Bel.—(Aside.) One day doth darken to another day,
Whilst thus my trembling soul, in sweet dismay,
Doubts which of these is fairer—the sweet face
Of Vanity, or proud Idolatry's grace;
For each is fair, as each fond tongue deceives me,
Or calls me king, or as a god receives me.

Idol.—Why art thou standing in such deep suspense?

Van.—What thought has seized thy mind and drawn it hence?

Bel.—Thy glorious beauty, O Idolatry! fires me;
Thy voice, O Vanity! whispering sweet inspires me.
And thus, in order to divert my sadness,
Moved by thy beauty, and thy words of gladness,
To-day, my grief forsaking,
I wish to woo, and win ye two, thus making
Idolatry be sharer of my glory,
And Vanity proclaim my conquests' wondrous story:—
Of that haughty King Nabuco,
To whose valorous hand triumphant,
To whose majesty and splendor
Fortune, fate, and power were subject;
Of that lightning of Chaldea,
Which, as from a sphere of thunder,
Bursting, left Jerusalem
Weeping 'mid its fires unnumber'd;

Of that king, who captive led
All that was of Jewish culture,
Best of blood and birth, who still
Pine in Babylonian dungeons;
Of that king who, from the Temple,
Golden cups and treasures plunder'd—
Sacred spoil which, round my throne,
Casts a new and dazzling lustre;
Of that king, in fine, who fed
On the green grass and the stubble
Of the fields, half man, half beast,
Hair-clad as with plumes of vultures—
I am son, fair deities.—
And to be in all things worthy
Of my father's fame and kingdom—
Of his fame, as of his fury—
The high gods whom I adore
Have bestowed such noble nurture
On me, that my breast, I doubt not,
Bears repeated, or redoubled,
His proud spirit: thus succeeding
To his soul as heir, it worketh
In my body, if two bodies
Ever so with one soul flourished:—
Not to be, then, Sovereign King
Of the lands that with their currents
Tigris or Euphrates bathes,
Or the sun in his effulgence
Lights—those numerous lands which he
Rises early from his slumbers
But to see (that so his task
May be over ere the sunset)—
Can the thirst of my ambition
Satisfy or well keep under;
Nothing can do that, I feel,
Be it madness or presumption,
Until I o'er all these mountains
Am sole ruler or usurper.
'Tis the region of Senaar,
'Tis that rude and rigorous country,

Which beheld, 'twixt heaven and earth,
That stupendous strife and struggle,
When the pride of daring men
Boldly, but with little judgment,
Built, to counteract the gods,
Towers that soared sublimely sunward.
And that thou, O Vanity!
Mayest thy triumph know still further,
Thine, too, O Idolatry!
Listen, and be mute with wonder.
Calmly was the world enjoying,
In its first primeval summer,
The sweet harmony of being,
The repose of perfect structure;
Thinking, in its inner thought,
How from out a mass so troubled,
Which, by poesy, is called
Chaos, and by Scripture Nothing,
Was evolved the face serene
Of this azure field unsullied
Of pure sky, extracting thus,
In a hard and rigorous combat,
From its lights and from its shadows,
The soft blending that resulteth,
From the earth and from the waters,
The elaborate knot that couples,
By dividing and disparting,
Things which (each one taken asunder)
Form a separate something so,
But when all are joined, are nothing:—
She considered how the earth,
Though till then a wild uncultured
Waste it lay, grew bright with flowers,
Painted of a thousand colors;
How the vacant air was peopled
With the blithe birds' flight and flutter;
How the silver sea grew brighter,
As the fish clove through its surges;
How the fire, its torches twain,
Sun and moon, with fresh flames furnished,

Day and nights' undying lamps,
Night and day forever burning.
Finally, she thought of Man,
Who of all His glorious works here
God has fashioned like Himself,
As Creation's crowning wonder:—
Vain of such transcendent beauty,
All restraint she soon trod under,
Since for Beauty to be vain,
Is as ancient as the world is.
Vain and beautiful in truth,
An eternal home she judged it,
Not perceiving that for crimes,
Such as those that she indulged in,
Was reserved a universal
Deluge for her sure destruction.
In this fatal confidence,
Vicious men alone consulted
Their own passions; sin-possessed,
They to gluttony were subject;
They to avarice, anger, lust,
They to pride and self-indulgence.
Growing angry then, the gods,
From whom nothing can be curtained,
Counsel took to destroy the world,
Which to make had cost such trouble.
Not red deluges of lightnings,
Forged and falling from heaven's furnace,
Worked their wrath; but flames of water—
Since, of gods, the sire and sovereign,
Often thunders with the snow-fall—
Often with the fire inundates:
Covered thick was Heaven with clouds,
Dense, opaque, and dark, and turbid,
For though angry, that it might
Not revoke the absolute justness
Of the world's dread sentence, wished
Not to see the rigorous fullness
Of its own revenge; and thus
Hid itself in clouds and thunder—

Wrapped itself in robes of darkness—
For even God, being God, oft suffers,
When His wrath He most exhibits,
Slight excuses to o'ercome it.
First began a dew as soft
As those tears the golden sunrise
Kisseth from Aurora's lids;
Then a gentle rain, as dulcet
As those showers the green earth drinks
In the early days of summer;
From the clouds then water-lances,
Darting at the mountains struck them,
In the clouds their sharp points shimmer'd—
On the mountains rang their butt-ends;
Then the rivulets were loosened,
Roused to madness, ran their currents—
Rose to rushing rivers—then
Swelled to seas of seas:—O Summit
Of all Wisdom! Thou alone
Knowest how Thy hand can punish!
Drinking without thirst, the globe
Made lagoons and lakes unnumber'd;
Then a mighty sea-storm rushed
Through the rents and rocky ruptures,
By whose mouths the great earth yawns,
When its breath resounds and rumbles
From internal caves. The air,
In a prison dark and murky,
Now was held, which lower air,
When it sought to reach the upper
Roared confined—the palpitation
Of its fierce internal pulses
Making the great hills to shake,
And the mighty rocks to tumble.
The strong bridle of the sand,
Which the furious onset curbeth
Of the white horse of the sea
With its foam-face silver fronted,
Loosened every curbing rein,
So that the great steed, exulting,

Rushed upon the prostrate shore,
With loud neighing, to o'errun it.
The scared wild beasts, dispossessed
Of the savage caves that nursed them,
Flying to air-piercing peaks,
Might have thought, with slight presumption,
They were birds. The birds, too, swimming,
Might have thought some power had turned them
Into fishes; and the fishes,
Seeing earth's great caves and culverts,
Might have thought themselves transformed
Into land-beasts; for so jumbled
Was each separate species, that
In this moment of convulsion
('Twixt two waters, as we say
Of a man in doubt and trouble),
The poor bird, and beast, and fish
Roamed disconsolate and discursive,
Seeking where skin, scale, and plume
Might some sheltering home discover.
And at the last paroxysm,
When despair's lethargic dullness
Numbed each nerve, in mighty fragments
Burst the world's great frame asunder:
And as one, when drowning, strives,
With convulsive arm, to struggle
'Mid the waves, which, at their will,
Raise or sink him like the plummet,
Thus the World, in life's last throes,
Struggled so, and so was worsted.
Here a palace was prostrated,
There was hid a peak's proud summit,
Until utterly o'erwhelmed,
Amid groans and dying murmurs,
To the depth of forty cubits,
Water every portion covered—
Tomb too small for corse so great,
Was the ocean it lay under.
Forty sunless mornings rose,
For the clouds hung dark and dusky,

Mourning the sad obsequies
Of the mighty form defunct there.
That first saving ship alone,
Safe 'gainst every wild wave's bluster,
Borne upon the swelling sea,
Floated free o'er all its surface—
In such vicinage to the stars,
Near, so near, the day-star's lustre,
Venus was its topmast's lantern,
And its beacon-fire Arcturus:—
To this ship had Noe's care
What remained of the world conducted,
There depositing, in safety,
Every species that earth nurtures,
Till the moment came, the sea,
To its God-given laws made subject,
Wondering, saw once more, once more,
The pale earth, now moist and musty,
With its tangled, matted hair,
Full of wrinkles, cracked and crumpled,
Lifting up its mournful face,
Touched, but warmed not, by the sunbeams,
Lifting its sad countenance,
Draped with sea-weeds, dank and muddy,
And in silent eloquence,
With a grateful heart saluting,
O'er the Ark, the bow of peace,
Shining golden, green, and ruddy.—
Thus men's second Adam came,
And a second birth resulted
In the numerous living things
With which all the earth was furnished.
Nimrod, son of Canaan, heir
Of the thrice-transmitted curses,
He and his, a hateful brood,
Full of evil and injustice,
All the broad lands of Chaldea,
With their families and sons there,
Occupied; their sons, of whom
Each was of a size so bulky,

As to seem a moving mountain,
Formed of members and of muscles.
These, then seeing that an Ark
Saved the world, conspired, consulted,
With a fabric more ambitious—
With a safe and surer structure—
How to counteract Heaven's anger,
By a force so proud and stubborn,
As might, in a second deluge,
Save, restore, and reconstruct them.
They to make a lofty tower
Mountains upon mountains tumbled,
And the proud neck of the earth,
Bending 'neath so great a burden,
Felt as if it needs must break
From the pressure that it suffered,
So that with the weight it groaned,
So that with the load it shudder'd.
Higher grew the tower, and higher
The ambition of the workmen
To a double height to raise it,
For there were none there but further'd
The great work, intent to see
The tall tower's stupendous structure—
Straight as the Ionic column,
Strong and simple as the Tuscan,
A huge hindrance to the winds,
The moon's plaything and obstructor.
Now with its imposing front
Had it the blue sky encumber'd,
And its great trunk in the air,
As with shadowy night had blurr'd it,
When, in all the pomp and pride
Of this daring and presumption,
Heaven was pleased to stop its course,
For it was displeased, disgusted
To behold the attempt to scale
Heaven's high walls, by God constructed.
And that, therefore, by assault
Man should never gain the summit,

It such varied forms of language
Introduced among the workmen,
That not one could understand
Ev'n the words himself had muttered.
Voices mingled all together
Inharmoniously concurrent—
Sounds were spoken, human sense
Ne'er before had heard or utter'd;
This one knew not what was said,
What he heard confused the other,
So that every order given
Caused confusion, cries, and blunders.
Two and seventy tongues were those,
Which these men with strange and sudden
Impulse spoke—it pleasing Heaven
To inspire so great a number.—
Two and seventy dialects
Echo, which each sound redoubles,
Quickly formed from every tongue;
So that men, confused and puzzled,
Almost rushed from their own selves—
That is, if one e'er so rushes.

And so ceased the mighty siege:
Nothing from the attempt resulted—
Nothing of that wondrous fabric—
Nothing of that glorious structure.
For a cloud, with storm-fire pregnant,
That to a more swift destruction
It might bring it, from its entrails
Darted flames, and smoke, and sulphur,
Making of the tower's high daring
Its own solemn tomb sepulchral—
Monument, and pyre, and urn,
Of its ruined walls constructing.

I, then, seeing that my breast
Even for Nimrod's glory thirsted,
Think that from the existing ashes
Of the tower that so has crumbled,
I am he who should rebuild it.
Since in synchronous conjunction

Vanity and Idolatry
To this high achievement urge me:
Since if thou wilt give the boldness
That to empire must conduct me;
If, for me, the gods thou movest—
If thou, Vanity, giv'st me succor,
If, Idolatry, thou dost aid me,
Who will dare deny, distrustful,
That thus, desperate and undaunted,
I so great a deed can compass?
Idolizing thy proud beauty—
Vain of thine, too, so effulgent—
Sacrificing to thy idols,
Of thy favor ever trustful,
Kneeling reverent at thy altars,
In fruition of thy fulness,
Upon plates of gold and silver,
High embossed or deeply sculptured,
Shall my name endure forever,
While the years of time are numbered.

Idol.—At thy feet thou'lt see me lie,
Ever fond, and faithless never.

Van.—Ever, O Belshazzar! ever,
Of thy life, the light am I!

Idol.—Wouldst thou have a god's position?—
Thee, as God, will I adore!

Van.—And my wings, that thou may'st soar,
I will give to thy ambition!

Idol.—Crowned by me, thy star shall live,
Though the dark cloud round it gathers.

Van.—I, a ladder of light feathers,
So to scale the sun, will give!

Idol.—I, in sculpture's fair relief,
Shall thy form to time hand down!

Van.—I, the laurel of thy crown
Shall increase by many a leaf!

Bel.—Give me both your hands: I've trod
Doubtful paths, but this embracing—

This close bond—this interlacing—
What shall break?

Dan.—(Advancing.) The hand of God!

Bel.—Who has ventured—who is he
That has dared this bold reply?

Tho.—I it was not.

Bel.— Who, then?

Dan.— I!

Bel.—How, O Jew! and can it be,
That you thus so bold have grown,
In Jerusalem, the holy,
Late a captive, now a lowly
Dweller here in Babylon?
Exiled from that natal sod,
Which a home, a shelter, gave you;
Poor and wretched, what can save you
From my power? (Half draws his dagger.)

Dan.— The hand of God!

Bel.—(Aside.) Oh! this potent voice that dares me—
Strong to stop the heart's pulsations—
Makes me wonder at my patience,
From my very anger scares me;
Something strange, mysterious, odd,
Marks us two.—(Aloud.) Since I intend thee
Here to die, can aught defend thee?
Speak! say what?

Dan.— The hand of God!

Tho.—(Aside.) How he the upper hand maintains!

Van.—Leave him, for I can't express,
How I loathe his lowliness.

Idol.—How his faith my faith disdains!

Bel.—Safe from my chastising rod
Take your life; but you should know,
It to these two queens you owe,
Not unto the hand of God!
(Exit with Vanity, Idolatry, and Attendants.)

SCENE THE THIRD.

Daniel, Thought.

Thought.—You have got off nicely now,
And I thank you for the lesson,
Since when any troubles press on
My attention, I know how,
In a moment's time, to clear me;
I, not knowing why or wherefore,
Need but say "God's hand," and therefore
Every soul about must fear me.
Since the thing's so nicely planned,
That at hand good guardians hide here,
Let us, shaking hands, divide here;
Go, in God's name, to God's hand. (Exit.)

SCENE THE FOURTH.

Daniel. Presently, Death.

Daniel.—Who, O Lord of night and day!
Can endure these dread offences—
Sinful Vanity's pretences,
Bold Idolatry's display?
Who will end so great an ill?
Who will give my faith full scope,
'Neath the buckler of my hope,
To avenge such wrongs?

(Enter Death, wearing a sword and dagger, and dressed symbolically in a cloak covered with skeletons.)

Death.— I will.

Dan.—Awful shape, to whom I bow,
Through the shadowy glooms that screen thee,
Never until now I've seen thee;
Fearful Phantom, who art thou?

Dea.—Daniel, thou Prophet of the God of Truth,
I am the end of all who life begin,

The drop of venom in the serpent's tooth,
The cruel child of envy and of sin.
Abel first showed the world's dark door uncouth,
But Cain threw wide the door and let me in;
Since then I've darkened o'er life's checker'd path
The dread avenger of Jehovah's wrath.
From Sin and Envy, then, I first drew breath,
That these two furies might possess my breast;
Through envy is it that I give white death
To all who have the light of life possessed;
Through sin it is my dark breast treasureth
Death for the soul, for souls die like the rest:
If to expire doth bring, with dolorous dole,
Death to the body, sin doth kill the soul.
If from God's Judgment thou thy name dost take,
And I, with fatal flash, must strike the blow,
Since 'neath my feet as victims I must make
All things that live, or think, or breathe, or grow,
Why art thou frightened at me? Why dost quake
With what is mortal in thee, weak and low?
Take courage, then, and let us two, to-day,
God's Judgment thou, and I His Power display.
Though 'tis no wonder thou art frightened—no,
Even wert thou God, to look and gaze on me,
Since when will come the flower of Jericho—
The blood-bright beauteous rose of Calvary,
He, in his human part, though God, will show
A trembling fear; and when He yields to me,
The stars will fall, spark after mighty spark—
The moon grow pale, and even the sun grow dark.
This hapless fabric shall appear to fall,
This lower sphere shall feel the earthquake's shock;
The earth shall faint as at the end of all,
And flower on flower lie crushed, and rock on rock;
Long ere the evening spreads her purple pall,
Long ere the western sky shall fold his flock
Of fleecy clouds, the day shall die, and night
Don its dark cloak in mourning for the light.
But my sole duty in this present hour,
O Wisdom sent of God! is thee to obey;

Give thy commands, the deathless need not cower,
And that which cannot die, may surely slay;—
Mine is the arm, but thine the motive power—
Mine is the work, but thou must point the way;
So great my thirst of life is, that its rage
Not even an angry deluge could assuage.
The proudest palace that supremely stands,
'Gainst which the wildest winds in vain may beat—
The strongest wall, that like a rock withstands
The shock of shells, the furious fire-ball's heat:
All are but easy triumphs of my hands—
All are but humble spoils beneath my feet;
If against me no palace wall is proof,
Ah! what can save the lowly cottage roof?
Beauty, nor power, nor genius, can survive,
Naught can resist my voice when I sweep by,
For whatsoever has been let to live,
It is my destined duty to see die.
With all the stern commands that thou may'st give,
I am, God's Judgment, ready to comply;
Yea, and so quickly shall my service run,
That ere the word is said the deed is done!
In the brief respiration, which between
The heart and lip doth flow, while life doth last,
The movement of the marvelous machine
Will, by a breath be stopped, and all be past!
Corse of itself, the heart will then be seen
To fall, like some lost world through chaos cast,
And that which was the throne of life become,
By just decree, its sepulchre and tomb.
I Nimrod's fields shall waste with burning fire,
I shall bring low proud Babel's rabble rout,
I shall the dreams of Behemoth inspire,
I shall the plagues of Israel pour out,
I Naboth's vines shall stain with dyes of Tyre,
I the bold front of Jezebel shall flout;
I shall revengeful Absalom's beard make red
With the warm blood of Amnon foully shed!
I shall the majesty of Achab smite,
Dragged in his crimson chariot o'er the plain;

I with the daughters of the Moabite
The unsullied tents of Zambri shall profane;
I shall the spears of Joab guide aright,
And if a greater glory I can gain,
I shall inundate, in my sateless mood,
Senaar's broad plains with lost Belshazzar's blood!

Dan.—Minister severe and just,
Agent of an angry God,
Thou whose dread judicial staff
Is a scythe and not a rod;
Since we two His dread tribunal
Represent here, I would not
That the awful book's decree—
Book that, in all strictness, ought
To be book the best remembered,
But which is the most forgot,
You should execute, until,
In a voice with pity fraught,
You have given him needful warnings,
Ere his final doom is wrought.
King Belshazzar's name doth mean
Hidden treasure, and I know
That, 'mong men, their souls, unseen,
Like a hidden treasure glow.
His I wish to win; and thus
Only give thee leave to go
To Belshazzar, to awake him
To a sense of coming woe:
Make him think that he is mortal;
And as anger the swift blow
Oft suspends, the sharp sword clutching
Ere that it unsheathes it—so
I permit that you should clutch it,
But that you unsheathe it, no. **(Exit.)**

SCENE THE FIFTH.

Death, solus.

Death.—Woe is me! how great a yoke
On my hapless head you throw!

O'er my feet what chains of ice!
O'er my hands what numbing snow!
By thy precepts bound, O thou
Type of God's unfathomed course!
Death is without any vigor,
Anger without any force.
That he is a mortal man,
To remind him, and no more,
Faintly adumbrates my rigor,
Gives my voice, but not my roar.—
Thought, come hither.

SCENE THE SIXTH.

Thought, Death.

Thought.— Who doth call me?

Death.—I am he who called.

Tho.— And know
I am just the one who'd rather
Ne'er be called to thee to go.

Dea.—Why, what reason have you?

Tho.— Dread.

Dea.—What is dread?

Tho.— The fear I show.

Dea.—What is fear?

Tho.— Why, fear is terror.

Dea.—What is terror?

Tho.— Pictured woe.

Dea.—Ah! you speak an unknown language;
None of all these things I know.

Tho.—Then you give the thing you have not.

Dea.—It, not having, I bestow.
Tell me, where is now Belshazzar?

Tho.—In the garden there below,
With the two he worships.

Dea.— Place me

With him. Swift as winds that blow,
Bear me thither.

Tho.— I will do so,
Since the courage to say no
Wholly fails me.

Dea.— How most just
Is God's precept this doth show,
That to make him think of me,
With his very Thought I go. (Exeunt.)

SCENE THE SEVENTH.

Enter Belshazzar, Idolatry and Vanity.

Idolatry.—Oh! my lord, what sudden sadness——

Vanity.—Oh! my lord, what painful throe——

Idol.—Interrupts thy conversation?

Van.—Thus disturbs thy fancy so?

Belshazzar.—Ah! I know not this strange pain.

SCENE THE EIGHTH.

Enter Thought, followed by Death.

Thought.—(To Death.) Come, he's here.

Belshazzar.— I only know
I was thinking of the threats
By the prophet's voice foretold,
In what way God's promised hand
Would its vengeance wreak.
(The Thought recedes, letting him see Death, who was behind him.)

Dea.— Behold!

Bel.—What is this I see, O Heavens?—
Phantom, that no blood doth warm,
Vision, feigning form and voice,
Without having voice and form!
Say, how didst thou enter here?

Dea.—With his light the bright sun throws
Shadow also: I'm the shadow,

If he as the World's Life glows,
I am the World's Death, and thus
I can go where'er he goes;
Since to lights and shadows space
Equally possession owes.

Idolatry.—(Aside.) Who is this at sight of whom
We two here are left forlorn?

Bel.—Why at every step of thine
Does my pride seem backward borne?

Dea.—'Tis because thy steps turn back;
Mine press on untired, unworn.

Tho.—(Aside.) It was wrong in me, I see,
To have borne him to his bourne.

Bel.—Say, what wouldst thou, and who art thou,
Light or Shadow?

Dea.— I'm no more
Than a creditor of thine,
Who wants payment of the score.

Bel.—What do I owe thee? What do I owe thee?

Dea.—Here is the whole debt you owe,
In this note-book written down.
(Takes out a memorandum-book.)

Bel.—'Tis a false and treacherous blow,
For this note-book is mine own,
Lost by me some time ago.

Dea.—Yes; but then the memoranda
Which you lost, I found;—and so
Read them.

Bel.—(Reading.) "I, the great Belshazzar,
Of Nabuco-Donosór
Son, confess my mother's womb
Me in sin conceived and bore,
And that I received a life——
(Oh! I freeze to read it o'er!)
Which I'm bound to pay to Death,
When and where, on sea or shore,
He is pleased the debt to claim:—
'Tis the primal bond of yore

Moses' pen transcribed, to which
Adam, Job, and David bore
Their attestation." 'Tis too true,
I confess it; but implore
For my life extended time.

Dea.—Well, I'm liberal now, the more
That this is not the fixed day
When God's Mercy will be o'er.
And that you, Belshazzar, may
Recollect the debt hencefore,
Take this note of highest wisdom,
On the dread memorial pore.
(Exit, giving Belshazzar a paper.)

SCENE THE NINTH.

Belshazzar, Idolatry, Vanity, The Thought.

Belshazzar.—"It is written, how the Spirit
Spoke to man these words of woe:
Dust thou wert, and dust thou art,
And dust thou'rt doomed to be:" Oh! no:
Was I dust, and I immortal?
Am I dust, yet no end know?
Can I yet be dust?—the mighty?—
'Tis delusion to say so.
(Stands musing, while Thought moves rapidly round him.)

Thought.—I, the Thought, as fool, dance round
All my masters, high and low.

Bel.—Is not Idolatry divine?

Tho.—(Moving toward Idolatry.) Lady, now to you I go.

Bel.—Is not Vanity a goddess?

Tho.—(Moving toward Vanity.) Now to you my cares I owe.
(Moves round both.)

Bel.—How my vacillating Thought
'Twixt the twain goes to and fro!

Idolatry.—(To Vanity.) What can this strange scroll contain,
That can thus divert him so
From ourselves?

Vanity.—(Taking the paper from him.) In this way we
Will find out.
Tho.— A clever throw!
The memorial of Death
Vanity takes from him so.
Bel.—What is this that passes from me?
Van.—Useless leaves that thus I throw
To the winds, to be their sport.
(Tears up the paper, and scatters the pieces about.)
Bel.—Then you both were here? Is't so?
Idol.—What has happened?
Bel.— Oh! I know not;
Some knight-phantom, spectre, ghost,
All engrossed my phantasy,
My discourse, my words engrossed:
But whate'er the phantom was,
It, with all its horrid host,
Has evanished. Was it much
Night fled frightened—sure to know
That in your bright eyes the sun
Would be seen so soon to glow?
And not only unto me,
Not to me, it seems, alone,
Shines the light that thus illumes me—
Beams the splendor o'er me thrown—
But to the whole garden: since
Dark was the red orient zone
Of the sun, till you it saw;
Then, indeed, the morn arose—
Rose with double light; your eyes
Flash two suns; your cheeks disclose
Two auroras;—waiting these
Day kept dark his realm of rose.
Van.—Since we're suns, then, and auroras,
From its world-wide worship old,
Idolatry must be the sun,
I the aurora, pale and cold,
By the greater light outshone.
Thus to her the valley owes

All the splendor it enjoys;
Since from shadowy night's repose
'Tis not the aurora wakes it,
But another sun that glows!

Idol.—I concede that thou'rt aurora,
And to give thee first place so,
I concede that I'm the sun;
For 'tis on the beauteous snow
Of aurora's clouds of pearl
That the sun's first roses glow.
And her light thus being the first
Over his a charm to throw,
Then aurora's light must be
Fairer than the sun's can show,
Since it shone into the valley
Earlier than the sun's could go.

Tho.—Wit and Beauty here compete
Which the higher place shall hold;
And since now the garden bowers,
In sweet rivalry enrolled,
Call us to their founts and flowers—
On this couch of green and gold,
Woven by the hand of spring,
Sit ye down. The birds' sweet notes
Woo us, and among the boughs
A delicious soft air floats
Murmuring music, while the leaves
Tremble as its breath steals o'er—
Where in flowing fragrance glide
Streamlets by an emerald shore,
And in frankincense and myrrh
Spreads the meads' enameled floor.

(They all sit down, Belshazzar being in the midst. Idolatry takes off his hat, and fans him with the plume.)

Idol.—With this beauteous tuft, whose plumes
Vanity's fair fingers wove
From the peacock's radiant tail,
Worthy of the wife of Jove,
I will fan thee.

Tho.— Wer't not better
That was left to me, who go
Thus about, the subtle fan
Of the Thought? But no; not so—
Since 'tis only in appearance
A Japan-faced fan I show.

Van.—Listening to my voice and lute,
Shall the light breeze linger o'er.

Bel.—Oh! the music of aurora
Shall not touch the inmost core
Of my heart with tenderer feeling
Than the song your sweet lips pour,
Even when morn, with pearl and flower,
Welcomes the young day once more.

Van.—(Singing). *Yes, Belshazzar is divine,*
Since to-day to his high praises
Statues proud Idolatry raises,
Vanity erects a shrine.

SCENE THE TENTH.

Enter Death.

Death.—(Aside.) Borne in rapid flight along,
Here sweet notes salute mine ears,
False as are the crocodile's tears—
Fatal as the siren's song.
Vanity hath done this wrong,
Driving from his thoughtless brain
All remembrance of my pain.
Let my shadow then affright him,
Let my awful shape excite him
To new fears, since words are vain.
Henbane and the poppy's juice
With your slumberous spells enthrall him;
Let my pallid shape appal him
In the dreams that you produce.
Pour, as from some Stygian sluice,
Visions words cannot express,
Typical of me no less—

Frenzy, lethargy, illusion,
Poison, horror, and confusion. (Belshazzar sleeps.)

Vanity.—Seems he not to slumber?

Idolatry.— Yes.

Van.—Then a glad delusive show,
From the realm of shadows taken
(That more proudly he may waken),
I athwart his dreams shall throw. (Exit.)

Idol.—I desire, too, he should know
To what daring heights and deeps
My proud pinion soars and sweeps. (Exit.)

Thought.—Here I lay my burden down,
For I only sleep, poor clown,
When my lord Belshazzar sleeps. (Lies down to sleep.)

SCENE THE ELEVENTH.

Belshazzar and Thought asleep; Death.

Death.—Man the rest of slumber tries,
Never the reflection making,
That, O God! asleep and waking,
Every day he lives and dies;
That a living corse he lies,
After each day's daily strife,
Stricken by an unseen knife,
In brief lapse of life, not breath,
A repose which is not Death,
But what death is teaches life:—
Sugared poison 'tis, which sinks
On the heart which it o'ercometh,
Which it hindereth and benumbeth.—
And can a man then live who poison drinks?—
'Tis forgetting, when the links,
That gave life by mutual fretting
To the Senses, snap, or letting
The imprisoned five go free,
They can hear not, touch, or see:—
And can a man forget this strange forgetting!—

It is frenzy, that which moves
Heart and eyes to taste and see
Joys and shapes that ne'er can be:—
And can a man be found who frenzy loves?—
'Tis a lethargy that proves
My best friend;—in trust for me,
Death's dull, drowsy weight bears he,
And, by failing limb and eye,
Teaches man the way to die:—
And can a man then seek this lethargy?—
'Tis a shadow, which is made
Without light's contrasted aid,—
Moving in a spectral way,
Sad phantasmal foe of day:—
And can a man seek rest beneath such shade?—
Finally, 'tis well portrayed
As Death's Image: o'er and o'er,
Men have knelt its shrine before,
Men have bowed the suppliant knee,
All illusion though it be:—
And can a man this Image then adore?—
Since Belshazzar here doth sleep,
Since he hath the poison drank,
Since he treads oblivion's blank,
Since no more his pulses leap,
Since the lethargy is deep,
Since, in horror and confusion,
To all other sight's exclusion,
He has seen the Image—seen
What this shade, this poison mean—
What this frenzy, this illusion:
Since Belshazzar sleepeth so,
Let him sleep and never waken,
Be his body and soul o'ertaken
By the eternal slumber.

(He draws his sword, and is about to kill him.)

SCENE THE TWELFTH.

Daniel rushes in.

Daniel.— No!

(He holds back the arm of Death.)

Death.—Who withholds my arm?

Dan.— Thy blow
So to stop, 'tis I: because
Payment is not due: to laws
Life and death are subject still,
Till their number they fulfill,
Thou, O Death! perforce must pause.

Dea.—And thy weeks their round will fly
(Cruel fate! O pain severe!),
They will end and disappear
When the Sinless One will die
For the sinner's sake: But why,
O thou judge of what I dare!
Why delay? With scornful air
They to-day mock me and thee—
Listen, there is Vanity,
Look, Idolatry is there.

SCENE THE THIRTEENTH.

Belshazzar and Thought, asleep; Death, Daniel, Vanity, Idolatry; A Statue.

The back scene opens: at one side a bronze equestrian statue is seen, the bridle of which is held by Idolatry; and at the other side, upon a tower, Vanity appears, plumed with many feathers, and having an instrument in her hand.

Idolatry.—Babylon's great king, Belshazzar,
Thou who, in sweet sleep's soft meshes,
Thus the sepulchre of thyself,
Diest living or livest deadened. . . . .

Vanity.—Babylon's great king, Belshazzar,
Thou who on the fresh and verdant

Turf-tomb of the spring here liest
Corse-like, yet with soul unsevered. . . . .

Belshazzar.—(In his sleep.) Who doth call me? who doth call me?
But if I my dreams may credit,
Still, O Vanity! still I see thee,
O Idolatry! still thou'rt present.

Idol.—I, divine Idolatry,
From the sun-god first descended,
Unto thee to raise this statue,
Come from Heaven's high halls eternal,
That your Image on the earth
May be reverenced and respected.

Van.—I, the Vanity of the world,
In the abysses first engendered,
And 'mong men being born, for sphere
Have Heaven's vacant void selected,
Worthily to enshrine thy statue,
I this fair fantastic temple,
Dedicate to thee, this structure,
Built upon the wind with feathers.

Bel.—(In his sleep.) Oh! what triumphs so exalted,
Oh! what flatteries sweet and pleasant,
Altars, offerings, prayers, and incense,
Thou, Idolatry, dost present me;—
Oh! to think that my proud statue
With the mightiest shall be reckoned:—
Rise! O Vanity! rise and crown thee
With Dominion's circling emblems—
Prove your essence, one by rising,
One by falling, prove your essence.
(The Statue descends, and the Tower rises, while Vanity and Idolatry sing.)

Idol.—(Singing.) *Down, O Statue, down to be*
Worshipped wide on every shore.

Van.—(Singing.) *As a shrine for evermore,*
Rise, O Tower of Vanity!

Idol.— *Downward sink!*

Van.— *And upward soar!*

The Two.— *Since to-day the breezes bore. . . . .*

Idol.— *Statues consecrate to me. . . . .*

Van.— *And a shrine to Vanity.*

Death.—Daniel, oh! my hand let loose;
Let me with one bold stroke level,
Even as mighty Samson once,
Both the idol and the temple:—

Daniel.—I shall leave it—O swift comet
Winged with fire!—unchecked, unfetter'd,
When the day of wrath comes round:
But until that day descendeth,
This bronze statue shall recall
To his mind another metal,—
Yea, a brazen trumpet, which,
Touched by my command, shall threaten,
Like the trumpet of the Judgment.

Dea.—For us both this course is better,
Since when that dread trumpet soundeth,
The whole universe must tremble
To its base and die: and so,
O thou mighty mass of metal,
In thy breast, even as its soul,
Say what damnéd spirit dwelleth!
Bare thyself even to thyself,
False bronze deity or devil! (Exit, with Daniel.)

SCENE THE FOURTEENTH.

Belshazzar and Thought, asleep; Vanity, Idolatry, The Statue.

Statue.—King Belshazzar!

Belshazzar.— Oh! what would'st thou,
Strange illusion, phantom, spectre,
Why afflict me, why attack me?

Sta.—List! and let the waking senses
Of the soul attend and hear me,

While those of the body rest them;
I, against Idolatry turn,
Turn as if a brazen serpent,
Since, even as a serpent dies,
I must die in mine own venom;
And while my hard lip of bronze
Slowly gives its iron message,
Let those flatteries of the wind,
Song and music, be suspended.
I that Statue am, which he,
Nabuchodonosor saw, of many
Metals made, with feet of clay,
Which a stone, by heaven directed,
Struck and crushed, a stone which fell
From the mountain of God's mercy:—
No, in vain thou would'st extort
Worship which high heaven rejecteth,
For I once, such worship seeking
From the Hebrew youths, God's servants,
Lit the Babylonian furnace,
Where, indeed, their faith was tested
By the fire that raged around them,
But in which it was not melted.
Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago,
By their lives this day attest it.
All the gods whom thou adorest,
Matter-formed of earth are earthy;
Thou adorest bronze in Moloch,
Gold in Astaroth thou respectest,
Wood in Baal, clay in Dagon,
Stone in Baalin, and the welded
Iron in the gods of Moab:—
And as now my voice expresses
The great God's decree, ye two
To its metal sounds surrender!—
Rend your feathers! break your statues!

(The Statue rises and the Tower descends.)

Vanity.—Oh! I burn.

Idolatry.— With cold I tremble!

Van.—In the rays of another sun
Has my flight abruptly ended.

Idol.—In the light of another faith
Has my darkness been disperséd.

(Vanity and Idolatry disappear, and the scene closes.)

SCENE THE FIFTEENTH.

Belshazzar, Thought.

Belshazzar.—(Awaking.) Hear me! linger! listen! wait!
Oh! do not so soon desert me,
Such sweet Vanity! such proud rapture!

Thought.—(Awaking.) Why this outcry? what affects thee?

Bel.—Ah! my Thought, I do not know:—
Since, when as a god I felt me,
Since, when sovereign lord I called me,
And awake from such sweet error,
'Tis thy foolishness alone,
'Tis thy folly I find present.

Tho.—What has passed then? What has happened?

Bel.—In pale sleep, as here I rested,
I beheld my various glory
In one dazzling dream collected.
High I saw my Vanity soar,
Till her starry brows touched heaven,
From her golden empire down
My Idolatry descended.
This to me a Statue raised,
That a glorious Fane erected,
And they scarce had raised the two,
That the Statue, this the Temple,
When a voice of bronze, a trumpet,
Which even yet doth make me tremble,
Burned, of this, the feathery fane—
And of that, the image melted—
Leaving to the winds the spoil
Of their ruins' smoking embers. . . . .

Woe is me! poor Vanity
Is the fleeting flower whose freshness
Blooms upon the almond tree,
And the rose, whose blood is reddened
By the Sun, Idolatry;
That, with facile fall surrenders
Easily to the first faint sigh,
Which the angry north wind threatens;
This, when absent dies the day,
Faints, or folds the crispéd velvet
Of its buds. Brief sun, brief rose,
Against Time's assaults so helpless!

SCENE THE SIXTEENTH.

Belshazzar, The Thought, Idolatry.

Idolatry.—No, a voice shall not conclude my story,
No fraud shall rob my triumphs and my glory;—
The pomp that I display,
Shall make this night outshine the light of day.—
Belshazzar, Prince Supreme,
For thee a god, more than a king, I deem.
Whilst thou in sweet suspense
Of sleep gave rest to every weary sense,
Making a truce with thought,
My love, with thy best interests ever fraught,
Its faithful watch would keep,
For fond affection knows not how to sleep,
A supper, rich and rare,
Full of all dainties cunning could prepare,
Things yet unknown to taste,
Are all, by my prevision, duly placed:
What every sense could wish
Breathes from each vase, or tempts from every dish:
Upon the sideboards glow
Rich gold and silver vessels all a-row,
And many a costly prize,
Whose brightness gives a dropsy to the eyes.
Sweetest perfumes

Breathe their delicious fragrance through the rooms
From emerald braziers filled with souls of flowers
That died in fair Arabia's happy bowers:
Sole food, as thou thyself can'st tell,
That satisfies the hunger of the smell.
The music, too, in well-accorded note,
Nor yet too near, nor yet too far remote,
From many a silken string, and mellow horn,
Quenches the thirst wherewith the ear is born.
The table-cloths of white,
Around whose 'broidered edges pinks unite
With clustered lilies, which commingled throw
A brighter brightness o'er the blinding snow
On which they lie; give to the wondering touch.
A smooth surprise it cannot feel too much.
Nectar, ambrosia, such as gods might claim,
Cold, icy drinks 'tis freshness but to name,
From the rich orange and the rose distilled,
For thee, in golden goblets shall be filled,
To please thy taste, that so in joyous state,
With every course the cups should alternate.
And that these cups may be
To-day the surest proof of victory,
The vessels sacred then to Israel's God,
Which Nabuchodonosor, unawed,
Bore off from great Jerusalem, the day
When a remoter East received his sway,
Command them here to bring:—
This night, with them, thou'lt pledge the Gods, O King!
And thus profane the temple's sacred store,
In honor of the idols I adore:
For sweet dessert, let these my arms suffice,
Inventing, feigning, every fond device
By which, as in a cipher's interlacing,
Thy greatness may be known from my embracing,
Love's sweetest manna this, in which unite
Smell, tasting, touch, the hearing, and the sight.

Belshazzar.—In seeing thee, the memory fades away,
Of all the solemn thoughts I held to-day,

Thy living light in lustrous beauty beams,
I wake and find thee fairer than my dreams.
Thy light, alone, I feel,
Can from my heart the fatal sadness steal,
That keeps it so dejected.

Thought.—By heaven! this is but just what I expected,
You're not so foolish, though not overwise:
As such a glorious supper to despise:—
Let there be feasting, let us be jolly,
This night, at least, we'll banish melancholy,
My folly rises now to exaltation,
By cynics sometimes called inebriation.

Bel.—Let the gold vessels, which within the shrine
Of conquered Judah, flowed with mystic wine
For Israel's priests, those cups so richly chased,
Be filled for me too.

Tho.— I admire your taste.

Bel.—Go for them.

SCENE THE SEVENTEENTH.

Belshazzar, The Thought, Idolatry, Vanity; Music, Attendants, etc.

Vanity.—(Entering.) Stay; for I the vessels bring,
From Vanity's hands receive the cups, O King!

Idolatry.—Set out the tables for the supper here,
Close by the summer-house.

Thought.— For me? Oh! dear.

Idol.—For thee, my friend? Why, who here spoke of thee?

Tho.—He who says supper, speaks he not of me?
For if I am to sup, the thing is clear,
Señora, that the supper standeth here,
And this reminds me of an antique song,
Brief is the moral and the stave not long. (Sings.)

"Supper for me was made, I think,
Since I was born to eat and drink,
For in easy mood, I submit to food,
When the wine is old and the meat is good."

(The table is brought in, on which the sacred vessels are displayed; the attendants commence serving the banquet.)

Belshazzar.—Here take your seats ye two; along the sides
Sit ye, my friends, and take what heaven provides;
When even the Temple gives us cups at call,
Be sure the supper has been meant for all:—
Now, let the thanks that to the gods belong,
From your full hearts find utterance in song.

(Music.)

This table, O Idolatry!
Is an altar raised to thee,
O Vanity! thou'rt here adored,
Since, a thing without example,
The rich vessels of the Temple
Decorate Belshazzar's board.

(They all take their seats at the table.)

SCENE THE EIGHTEENTH.

Enter Death, disguised as one of the Attendants.

Death.—(Aside.) To the great feast of the king,
Thus disguised I freely enter:
Since at this great supper I
Am concealed and unsuspected,
I believe that I can hide me
'Mong the crowd of his attendants.
Careless here Belshazzar sits,
And of me has no remembrance,
Circled by his women round,
By his nobles and dependents.
Those rich cups which Solomon
To the one true God presented,
And with which his holy priests
Sacrificial rites effected,
Here but grace his banquet board. . . . .
Oh! thou Judgment of the Eternal,
Loose thy hand now, let mine loose, too,

For he surely hath the measure
Of his sins at last accomplished
In a sacrilege so dreadful.

Belshazzar.—Give me wine.

Thought.—(To Death.) Halloo! ho! comrade,
Have you an attack of deafness?—
Bring the king a cup of wine,
Whilst I to this dish address me.
(He draws a dish to himself and begins to eat.)

Dea.—(Aside.) For a servant I am taken:—
Well, the cup I will present him,
Since he can't know *me*, he who
Is so blinded and forgetful.
(He takes a gold goblet from the table.)
This rich vessel of the altar
Holds life in it, it is certain,
Since the soul, athirst for life,
Finds in it its sure refreshment.
But it also holds within it
Death as well as Life; its essence
Is of life and death commingled,
And its liquor is the blended
Heavenly nectar and the hemlock—
Bane and antidote together— (Aloud.)
Here, O Monarch! is the wine.
(He presents the cup to the King.)

Bel.—From thy hand I will accept it.
What a beauteous cup!

Dea.—(Aside.) O woe!
Not to know the draught is deadly!

Idolatry.—The King drinks; let all arise. (All arise.)

Bel.—Ye, the glories of my empire,
In this cup of Israel's God
I salute our own. Forever,
Moloch, god of the Assyrians,
Live! (He drinks slowly.)

Tho.— We drink the toast with pleasure:
Thirty thousand gods to-day

Seem too few to fill our revels;
I would like to drink them all.

Idol.—Let song mingle with the pledges.

(Music.)

This table, O Idolatry!
Is an altar raised to thee,
O Vanity! thou'rt here adored,—
Since, a thing without example,
The rich chalice of the Temple
Drains Belshazzar at his board.

(A great clap of thunder is heard.)

Bel.—What an awful sound! What means
This tumultuous voice of terror
That doth call the clouds to arm
On the battlefield of Heaven?—

Idol.—When you drank, it must have been
A salute the heavens presented
With their fearful thunder-guns.

Vanity.—See, a gloomy horror settles
O'er the sky, that hides the stars.

Dea.—I, who darkest night engender—
How I love this gloom, this horror!

Bel.—Comets dark, with burning tresses,
Through the air, wild birds of fire
Flash the lightning's flames incessant;
With loud cries of grief and pain
Groans the cloud, as if 'twere pregnant:
It in travail seems to be,
And 'tis so, for from its entrails
Breaks a bright bolt forth, the glowing
Embryo that filled its centre:
When the cloud gives birth to lightning,
Thunder but its cry expresses.

(A louder and more terrific clap of thunder is heard, accompanied by lightning: on the ceiling of the hall appears a hand, pointing to a paper, on which is inscribed, "Mané, Thecel, Pharés.")

See ye not? Oh, woe is me!

Through the trembling air projected
What is bursting, what is breaking,
Which, above my head, suspended
Hangs but by a hair, and glideth
Toward the wall. Its form presenteth
The appearance of a hand,
Of a hand, the cloud has sever'd
From some monstrous form unseen!—
Who, oh! who, in lightning, ever,
Arteries saw till now? I know not
What its finger writes, what message,
Since when it has left the impress
Of three rapid strokes or sketches
On the wall, to join its body
Once again the hand ascendeth. . . . .
Pale my cheek has grown, my hair
Stands on end through fear and terror,
Trembling throbs my heart, my breath
Chokes my parched throat, or deserts me.
For what was the Babel of tongues
Is to-day the Babel of letters.

Van.—I a burning mountain seem.

Idol.—I a statue of ice resemble.

Tho.—I am neither mountain nor statue,—
But a nice, fine fear o'erwhelms me.

Bel.—Thou, Idolatry, thou that knowest
All the gods' deep secrets, tell me
What do these strange letters mean?

Idol.—These I'm powerless to interpret:
Even the character I know not.

Bel.—(To Vanity.) Thou, whose genius comprehendeth
Deepest science—thou, the augur's,
The magician's, chief preceptress,
What here read'st thou? Say—What?

Van.— Nothing;—
Here my genius fails to help me:
These are all to me unknown.

Bel.—Thou, O Thought! dost comprehend them?

Tho.—You have asked a sage at last!
I'm an ignorant fool, heaven help me!
Idol.—Daniel, the same Hebrew, who
Did so well the dream interpret
Of the statue and the tree,
He will tell it.

SCENE THE NINETEENTH.

Enter Daniel.

Daniel.— List attentive:—
Mané means that God hath numbered,
And thy kingdom's days hath ended;
Thecel, that thou hast completed
The full number, thy offences
Not admitting one sin more;
Pharés, that a waste, a desert,
Will thy kingdom be, when seized
By the Medes and by the Persians.
Thus the hand of God hath written
With the finger thy dread sentence,
And its carrying out hath He
To the secular arm expressly
Delegated. This hath God
Done to thee, because perversely
Thou, with scorn and ribald jest,
Hast profaned the sacred vessels.
For no mortal should misuse
These pure vessels of the Temple,
Which, until the law of grace
Reigns on earth, foreshow a blesséd
Sacrament, when the written Law
Time's tired hand shall blot forever,
If these vessels' profanation
Is a crime of such immenseness,
Hear the cause, ye mortals, hear it!
For in them, life, death, are present—
'Tis that he who receives in sin,
Desecrates God's holy vessel.

Belshazzar.—In them is there death?

Death.— There is,
When they are by me presented,
I, the pride-born child of sin,
Of whose dark and deadly venom
He who drinks must surely die.

Bel.—Ah! in spite of all my senses,
I believe thee, I believe thee;
For though torpid and dejected,
Through the sight, and through the hearing,
Have thy fearful voice and presence
Penetrated my proud bosom—
To my very soul's seat entered:—
Save me, O Idolatry!
From this agony.

Idol.— I am helpless,
For at the terrific voice
Of that Mystery predestined,
Which you have to-day profaned
In these cups that are its emblems,
All my courage I have lost—
All my former fire and mettle.

Bel.—Help me now, O Vanity!

Vanity.—I am humbled, through Heaven's mercy.

Bel.—Thee, O Thought! . . . .

Thought.— Thy greatest foe
Now is in thy Thought presented,
Since you did not wish to heed
The death-warnings it suggested.

Bel.—Daniel!

Dan.— I am God's decree:—
Yea, He hath pronounced thy sentence!
Yea, the measure is filled up!

Tho.—*Nulla est redemptio.*

Bel.—Alk, ah! all in this dread hour,
In this final need desert me!
Who, oh! who, hath power to save me
From this horror, from this spectre?—

Dea.—No one:—for thou would'st not be
Safe within the abysmal centre
Of the earth.

Bel.— Ah! fire enfolds me!

Dea.—Die, thou sinner!

(Death draws his sword, and stabs Belshazzar; he then seizes him in his arms, and they struggle together.)

Bel.— This is death, then!—
Was the venom not sufficient
That I drank of?

Dea.— No: that venom
Was the death of the soul; the body's,
This swift death-stroke representeth.

Bel.—With death's agony upon me,
Sad, despairing, and dejected,
Struggling against odds, and dying,
Soul and body both together,
Hear! ye mortal men, oh! hear,
What doth mean this fearful message,
What this *Mané, Thecel, Pharés*
Of the one Supreme God threatens;—
He who dares profane God's cup,
Him He striketh down forever;
He who sinfully receives,
Desecrates God's holiest vessel!

(Exeunt Death and Belshazzar struggling together, and after them The Thought.)

SCENE THE TWENTIETH.

Idolatry, Vanity, Daniel; then Death.

Idolatry.—Like a sleeper I awaken
From the dreams of my forgetting:
And since even Idolatry
God Himself hath not excepted
From the crowd of living things
In the mystic sheet collected,

Which one day will Christ command
Peter there to kill and eat of,
Would that I could see the light
Of the law of grace, O Heaven!
Now while reigns the written law!—

Enter Death, dressed as before, with sword and dagger, and a cloak covered with skeletons.

Death.—You can see it represented
In the fleece of Gideon,
In the Manna of the desert,
In the honeycomb the lion's
Mouth contained, in the unblemished
Lamb, and in the Sacred bread
Of Proposition.

Daniel.— If these emblems
Show it not, then be it shown
In the full foreshadowing presence
Of the feast here now transformed
Into bread and wine; stupendous
Miracle of God; his greatest
Sacrament in type presented.

(The scene opens to the sound of solemn music; a table is seen arranged as an altar, with a remonstrance and chalice in the middle, and two wax candles at each side.)

Idol.—I, who was Idolatry,
Who to idols false and empty
Worship gave, to-day effacing
Both their names and mine forever,
Will be Latria, adoring
Thus this sacrament most blesséd.—
And at its high feast, Madrid
Celebrates with fitting splendor,
May Don Pedro Calderon
For his manifold demerits
Find excuse:—His faults and ours
Deign to pardon, and remember
That the poet's works but shadow
What the poet had intended.

THE CEREMONY

OF THE

PRINTER'S APPRENTICE

A GERMAN MORALITY PLAY.

BY WILLIAM BLADES.

(*Translated by John Rist.*)

PERSONAGES.

THE DEPOSITOR.
URIAN, the Depositor's Servant.
THE CORNUTE, or Apprentice.

WITNESSES.
THE PARSON.

SCENE—LÜNEBURG.

Prelude.

My worthy masters all, whom we are glad to see;
Matrons and maidens fair, who fill our hearts with glee;
God's blessing on you all! May his kind care and sway
Rest ever on your heads, and guide you on your way.
I ask of all now here, who honor us to-night
And witness this our play, to understand it right;
Only to act a farce would be of little use—
The moral of our play must be our best excuse.
We wish to show you how by customs old we've stayed,
And how a 'prentice true a journeyman is made
To praise the noble craft of printing I intend
With all my heart and soul. Now, Clio, kindly lend
Your aid! So shall I find the fitting word and phrase
To glorify our art with well-deserved praise.

The art of printing to us came
And as the Queen of Knowledge began her glorious reign
Thou mother of all arts, thou torch that lights our way,
Thou polar star for all who else would go astray!
Thou enemy of wrong, upholder of all right,
Who can withstand thy sword—thy sword of fearful might?

Whence comes to us this boon? Was it a Phidias bold,
Who carved Minerva's form in ivory and gold?
Perhaps 'twas Praxiteles, whose Venus charmed the sight;
Or fearless Dædalus, who vied with birds in flight.
Did printing come to us from Palamedes' field,
The first man who engraved initials on his shield?
Was it Pyrgoteles, who graved on pearl and stone
Great Alexander's head? Of all these it was none;

Nor China, with her arts and learning of old time;
Nor France, with all her schools and scholars in their prime;
Nor Holland, who would fain extol her Coster's fame;
Nor Italy, herself, can the invention claim.
No, 'twas a German knight, our Gutenburg the stout,
The man of noble blood, who worked the problem out;
He lived in fair Mayence, of writers long the seat,
And there, through trials long, he made the art complete.

THE CEREMONY OF THE PRINTER'S APPRENTICE.

Enter Depositor, who walks up and down, looking about with a serious mien and deportment.

Depositor.—What is the reason, I would know.
This house is made so fine a show,
And with adornments grac'd?
Folks throng in here as to a dance;
They cannot come by simple chance
In such unwonted haste.
I fain would know what it may mean:
I'll call my knave, his wit is keen,
Perhaps he the cause can tell?
Come here, you rascal!—Urian!
Come here as quickly as you can,
And answer me right well.

Urian.—Here, master! I come quick and brave
Out of my corner nest,
And as your ever faithful slave
I'll drink now with the best.

Dep.—I am, indeed, quite well aware
That drinking is your only care;
But now, I bid thee say,
Whatever makes this house so trim?
Why are the walls so bright and prim?
Whence all these folks so gay?

Url.—(Holding his nose.) I cannot tell, but by the smell
A carrion beast must be about;
Some carcase dead, or fiend from hell,
Scents all the house throughout.

Dep.—I think myself there's some wild beast
That hereabouts is holding feast;
There is a nasty smell.
But get thee gone! Go to my field,
See that their spades my lab'rers wield,
And that they work right well.

Uri.—Master! your will shall soon be done;
Adieu, mein Herr, now I am gone. (Exit jumping.)

Dep.—(To audience.) There goes that fellow with a bound,
Truly he is an odd compound;
I think he must be mad.
Now he is witty, now a fool,
Now he is wallowing in a pool;
His pranks are very bad.

(Urian reappears, dragging in by the nose the "Cornute"—i. e., the apprentice, who is dressed in a most fantastic way, with a big red nose and a pair of huge horns on his head.)

Dep.—By heaven! what beast have you got here?
'Tis not a goat, nor stag, nor steer!
Say how you captured him.
He is a strange and wondrous sight
As ever saw the Heaven's light:
How got he in such trim?

Uri.—Well! Master, when I went away,
I met this beast careering;
Thought I, 'twon't do for me to stay,
He'll toss me, I am fearing:
So straight I seized him by the nose,
And tore his nostrils badly:
Lord! what a stench from him arose,
It turned my stomach sadly.

Dep.—Zounds! I may well astonished be
At such a beast. What name has he?
I wonder who's his master.
His head (driving his knuckles into it) is hard; his belly (giving him a punch in it) soft;

Two monstrous horns he bears aloft;
Pray, Urian, bind him faster.

Uri.—What! don't you see at once his kind?
His horns betray the brute;
His misshap'd head, and lack of mind,
Declare him a Cornute.

Dep.—A Cornute! bless me! what is that—
A pig, an ass, a mule, or what?
How wild your speech does run.
But listen, Master Urian,
Suppose we think of some good plan
To make of him some fun.

Uri.—The very thing! Just give a glance,
His legs seem over long;
I'll bet a florin he can dance
To any play or song.
Just like a ghost he soon shall prance,
Your ghosts are very strong.

(Lashes him with a whip, while the music plays loudly.)

Hei! Hei! Hei! Hei! now jump around,
Thou wondrous beast, upon the ground!
Look at the rogue; see how he sways,
As though he had the stomach-ache:
He does not like such dancing ways,
They make his heels too much awake.

(After some more gibes and lashes, Urian shows him a piece of paper.)

Now, gallows-bird! how thou dost stare,
As if thou wast bereft of sense!
This writing read, or else take care
Your head's not crack'd ere you go hence.

Cornutus.—How should I read, you ugly fool?
I, who was never sent to school.

Uri.—(Astonished.) Just listen to the rascal's speech—
He cannot read, and yet can preach.
In high Dutch, too, as if the Devil
In low Dutch couldn't be as civil.

You scamp! at once these lines now read
Or else I'll spell them on your head.

Cor.—(Reading doggedly.) A shameless rogue, a worthless wight,
A lying knave, I'm called aright.

Dep.—That's right enough, we know it well,
Your character you truly spell.

Uri.—These Cornute folk are all sad liars,—
He said just now he could not read;
'Tis plain of falsehood he ne'er tires;
A very cheat he is, indeed.

Dep.—Forsooth, my knave, so sharp and true,
His dull deceits will ne'er cheat you.
Now feel his pocket on the right,
While I the left expose to light.

Uri.—(Pulling out a letter.) The devil take thee! ha! ha! ha!
Thou canst not read, thou lubber slow,
Thou Mat of Cappadocia,
Thus do I give thy nose a blow. (Smites him.)

Dep.—(Reading the address on the letter.) "To be handed to the most honorable, much-esteemed, art-knowing young journeyman, Master N. N., who is my heart's love."

Uri.—(Boxing the Cornute's ears.) See! master mine! this dullard here
As a young journeyman would stalk,
For which I now have boxed his ear,
To stop his bumptious, bragging talk.

Dep.—In truth, he is a Cornute mean,
Who is not fit one's boots to clean.
Can any maid love one so rude?
This letter doubtless now will tell;
Outside it looks all very well,—
The writing's pretty good.

(Reading.) Beloved of my heart, my hope, my life, my dove,
To whom I always shall devote my utmost love,
A welcome thousandfold take from thy shepherdess,
Who loves her Lucidor with constant kindliness.
My love to you I vow is far beyond all measure:

Have you forgot me quite, my only, dearest treasure?
Think of the many times I by your love was blessed,
When lip was glued to lip, and heart to heart was pressed.
Alas! I hear to-day that you must be deposed,
And to indignities unnumbered be exposed;
I would upon myself with joy take all these harms,
If suffering for you could bring you to my arms.
I cannot bear to live without my only treasure,
For you alone can make my life a joy and pleasure.
You are my only prop—you make my bitter, sweet;
Oh! that the time had come when we again shall meet.
I sadly fear, my love, you'll be quite lost to me,
And leave me all alone when you deposed shall be.
A secret I've to tell, and do not doubt that you
Will hasten back to me, my love sincere and true.
She who sends this
Waits for a kiss,
But signs no name
For fear of shame.

P. S.—For love's own sake
This ring pray take,
That you keep me
In memory.

Uri.—(In utter astonishment.) A thousand plagues! I hardly know
What of this scrawl to think,
Thou thunderhead, thou carrion crow!
Dost thou at women wink?
Thou art of maids a pretty knight,
With red nose all aglow.

Dep.—And now, thou shuffling young blockhead,
Pray tell without demur:
Know'st thou a trade? Canst earn thy bread?
You dirty, mangy cur.

Cor.—(Humbly.) Truly, I've learnt the printing art,
And by my fingers' skill
I hope in life to get a start,
And keep myself from ill.

Uri.—Thou lying scamp, thou dirty swine,
Is this your ignorance of reading?
Just now you could not scan a line,
And now as printer you are pleading.
There's not a devil in all Hell
So many shameful lies could tell.

Dep.—Printing's an art in good repute;
Printers are learned and acute;
In solving questions they're not slow—
If thou art thus we fain would know.

(Here Depositor and Urian ask the Cornute a number of rare and comical questions.)

Dep.—We now must make a further trial.
Tell us, thou son of boorish peasant,
Before all friends that now are present,
Canst play the flute or finger viol?

Uri.—Well thought of, master. Now we've time,
We'll stand around all in a ring,
And while each from his book doth sing,
We'll chant a workman's rhyme.

(Here all the workmen and others present join in a chorus previously agreed upon, but such an one as will not give public offense.)

Uri.—This went off very well, indeed.
Zounds, master, it did sound divinely!
I wish my wife were here to speed
The mirth, for she can trip it finely.
Now let us ask this Cornute tame
If to some play he now can treat us—
Cards, dice, or any other game;
But we must mind he does not cheat us!
Here is the box, and here the dice,
A pot of beer shall be the prize;
I'll bet that he can count the eyes.
Now, beast, a main and try your luck.

(As Cornute is about to sit down Urian tips the bench and upsets him.)

Will you sit quiet, restless buck!

Dep.—Come, now, and shake your elbows, friend.

Cor.—I wish this game was at an end.

Uri.—(Knocking Cornutus over the fingers.) Right valiantly the dice you throw,
'Tis plain there's not much green in you.
You'll empty soon my purse, I know;
He must be clever you to "do."

Dep.—As by thy tricks I plainly see
That you're as cunning as can be,
Another tack we'll try a bit. (To Urian.)
Bring here our scientific tools,
He takes us for a lot of fools!
But soon he'll see how we can hit.
Arrange the bench and set it right,
Our talents he shall try to-night.

Uri.—At your command, my master good,
I'll fetch you tools as you may want them.
To cure his faults I'm in the mood;
'Twill be a rough task to unplant them.

(Urian fetches an axe, a plane, a saw, a pair of compasses, a razor, a ham and a forceps, all made very large of wood. He then throws down the Cornute on the bench, which upsets. After a lot of comic business, Cornute is stretched on the bench.)

Dep.—(To Urian.) First, take the axe and hew him square,
Each corner, bump and angle pare,
Then plane him well till all is straight,
Nor for his cries one jot abate.
Then with my compass, in good sooth,
I soon will see if all be smooth.

(Urian, punching him, kneading him, and chopping him and planing him, knocks him on to the ground again.)

See how he falls now, all a-heap;
Get up, you Cornute! Art asleep?

Dep.—With compasses I'll test him now.
Lie still! or else you'll get a blow.

(Sticks the compasses into various parts of his body.)

Well done! this pig so mannerless
You've planed right smooth, with much address.
His fingers, though, are still amiss,
But you know how to alter this;
So shape them with the file,
And mind that none of them you miss;
We'll make the rascal smile.

(Urian rasps his fingers.)

They're in trim now, so let him rise,
And fetch that ham here in a trice;
We'll see how he can carve.
These horned beasts can ne'er say no!
And as he must a-courting go,
'Twont do to let him starve.

(A great ham is placed before him, and as the Cornute is about to help himself Urian raps him on the fingers.)

Thou uncouth lout! what dost thou mean?
Where are thy manners? Not so speedy!
Wouldst have first share of fat and lean?
I'll teach thee not to be so greedy.

Dep.—Now has the time arrived, I ween,
To trim him up all nice and clean;
So shave his chin and scrape it.
And as he is to court a maid,
The scissors must come to our aid,
To cut his hair and shape it.

(They daub his face with black soapsuds, then shave him with the razor, and pretend to cut his hair.)

Uri.—(Pulling open his jaws.) His mouth with teeth is overstocked,
Too many has he for his share;
Look at this tusk! I am quite shocked,
It must come out, and so prepare.

Dep.—A monstrous fang, in length a yard;
Reach me the forceps; hold him hard.

(He pretends to pull out a tooth.)

Uri.—(Showing a big piece of wood, shaped like a tooth.) In
all my days I never saw
A tusk like this in any jaw.

Dep.—The tooth is out, brave Urian,
Give me pomatum now, my man,
T' anoint his sheepish head;
Should he a maid from far give some ache,
His nearer sight will turn her stomach;
And if he through the streets will go,
The dogs will follow him, I know.
(They rub a lot of foul grease over his head.)

Uri.—Hear me, you maidens! Steel your hearts
Against this brute of evil savor;
He has no manners, no good parts,
And you'd be poison'd by his flavor.

Dep.—Now lend a hand, my trusty knave,
And we his horse-hair head will shave;
While on his head this knife I'll wield
I will to you the scissors yield.
Have done, now, this is quite enough,
So fine is he, that we seem rough.

Uri.—(Knocking his hat over his eyes.) A grand improvement: now let's see
If we can sing another glee:
And try him for the last time.
Our games are nearly over now—
The finis of our game is near;
Present will soon be past time.
(Here a Volks-lied may be sung.)

Dep.—(Addressing Cornute.) You've had what you deserv'd; now say,
Will you reform, and from this day?

Cor.—To live henceforth I will endeavor
In virtue and in honor ever.

Dep.—Good! man of horns; now prithee say
If more of me you want to-day.

Cor.—My great wish is, sir, if you can,
Make me an honest journeyman.

Uri.—For that you are as fit, I vow,
As my grandmother's fat old sow.

Dep.—(Takes up the hatchet and knocks the hat and horns off the head of Cornutus.) There fall your horns; now take your oath
That vengeance you will ne'er essay
On either one of us or both
For all the scorn you've had to-day.

(Cornutus takes oath, repeating solemnly after Depositor.)

Dep.—I swear now at the end

Cor.—I swear now at the end

Dep.—My own cash I can spend,

Cor.—My own cash I can spend,

Dep.—And naught else I intend;

Cor.—And naught else I intend;

Dep.—No vengeance will I seek,

Cor.—No vengeance will I seek,

Dep.—But hold myself quite meek.

Cor.—But hold myself quite meek,
And offer you my cheek.

Dep.—(Gives him a hard box on the ear.) Your wages take thus from my hand,
Henceforth from no one you shall stand
Such treatment as to-day's;
And now confess each evil deed,
Take good advice to serve your need,
And then go on your way.

Uri.—(To the audience.) Our merry play is nearly done,
The Parson will be now appearing
To do his office. I, for one,
Bid you good-bye, and make a clearing. (Exit.)

Dep.—(To the audience.) Amongst you all, if there be one
Who to our ancient guild would come,
Let him speak out, and with forms old
And all due rites we'll him enfold.

Let him appear, and we, with pain,
Will go through this, our play, again. (Exit.)

(Here the two witnesses go out and reënter, conducting the Parson, who is in full priest's canonicals.)

Parson.—Good friends and masters all, I give you joy and greeting
What are your wishes, and for what this happy meeting?
I'm told you want me; well, I'm here;
If I can be of use, make it appear.

Witnesses.—Most honor'd sir, this youngster here
Has undergone our proofs severe
With patience and endurance.
We now entreat you set him free
From Cornute bonds, and let him be
Of good hope and assurance.
With water sprinkle him this night,
And tell him how to live aright,
And guide his life in ev'ry part
In true accordance with our art.

Par.—I will do this, but first of all
The Cornute on his knees must fall;
Confession must be made.
And then afresh he shall be named,
Or by our guild I shall be blamed
For leaving part unsaid.

(Here the Cornute shall confess to the priest as follows:)

Cor.—Good master, please to hear what I am now confessing,
Acknowledging that I have spent in sin my days;
To follow wicked men I never wanted pressing.
To vice and actions bad I always gave my praise.
To no one did I good—in doing wrong I revelled;
In mischief I rejoiced—I was an idle thief;
When everything went wrong, I laughed as if bedevilled,
When others were in luck my heart was filled with grief.
When of my 'prenticeship the term was gone and over
I was exceeding proud, as Grandee I would pose,

Who in his vain conceit could always live in clover;
Altho' no man did more all goodness to oppose.
I loved to be called "Sir," or "Monsieur," or "Signore,"
And liked to make pretense I was a man of mark,
So lost in self-conceit was I, and in vain-glory,
That I was oft in broils, and did in strife embark,
I had no mind for art, for manners, nor for learning,
So that at last horns of brutes grew on my head;
But you, good sir, who have my warmest thanks been earning,
Have freed me from these horns, and made me "man" instead.
A printer-journeyman I now am by your labor,
As plainly has been seen by all our honored guests,
And now I mean to live so as to gain the favor
Of God, and all true men; and here my purpose rests.

(This confession ended, the Parson bids him rise, and thus addresses him:)

Par.— I'm very glad to find
You mean to bear in mind
Your own renown and fame,
And this, your trial, over,
As printer you'll endeavor
To uphold the printer's name.

You have now truly told—
And fully did unfold
How you have sinn'd of yore;
Your tricks and their bad ending,
And that you are intending
To cancel the old score.

Now, if you wish to labor
For honor and for favor,
To Virtue's voice give heed.
I'll call you then in gladness,
When free from vice and badness,
A journeyman indeed.

My good advice now take,
It is no joke I make,
  I speak for your good weal;
And first to find endeavor,
A master kind and clever,
  Who has with you to deal.

Beware of lies and slander,
From truth you shall not wander,
  Be mindful of your fame.
With gamblers have no dealing,
Their trade is fraud and stealing,
  They bring to want and shame.

In speech and manner able,
Be modest at the table
  As an invited guest.
Speak well to get a hearing,
But be not overbearing,
  Talk less than all the rest.

If you'd gain approbation,
Still keep in mind your station;
  Don't speak without sure proof.
The absent never slander,
In idleness ne'er wander,
  From bad men keep aloof.

Do not retail each rumor,
Such is an evil humor,
  And often leads to woe.
But when your fellows gabble,
And joke, and idly babble,
  Leave them alone to go.

Of scolding and of railing
Beware,—it is a failing;
  To quarrel still be coy.
Refrain from tender cooing,
Matrons and maids pursuing
  Will never bring you joy.

Hear much, but keep from telling,
Tales are forever swelling,
  Much talk leads to disgrace.
At work be ever steady,
But be not over-ready
  To take another's place.

Full many make pretense,
With neither brains nor sense,
  To play a printer's part.
Avoid their bad example,
Their ignorance is ample—
  Talking is all their art.

Work hard, but work with reason,
Like bees work in the season;
  Make all the gain you may.
He who depends for living
On work, must still be giving
  His mind to it alway.

Be proper in all matters,
A man in rags and tatters
  Is in no easy way;
Low is his place at table,
Hardly will he be able
  To find employ and pay.

Attend to proper teachers,
And to the worthy preachers
  Who show us what is good;
Go still to church to pray,
On God look as your stay,
  The Bible as your food.

Of right be the defender
Against each wrong pretender.
  Your promise never break.
Keep clear of debt—'tis sorrow—
Earn all, but never borrow:
  Debts make the strong man weak.

Remember what I've said
As through the paths you tread
Of our immortal art.
God's blessing now be on you;
Where'er your fate may lead you
Act like a man your part.

(The Parson then calls on the Witnesses to come forward, and asks them to name the new journeyman. This done, he solemnly sprinkles him with water, but in such a manner that nobody shall be offended thereby, and pronounces over him these words:)

I hereby confirm and incorporate thee, N. N., in the name of our whole Companionship,

Veneris, Cereris, Bacchi,
Per pocula poculorum,
Amen.

THIS IS THE END OF OUR PLAY.

The ceremony being now over, the friends come forward and present gifts to the new journeyman, and wish him good luck. Sometimes a ball is given by the new journeyman or his parents.

Before the company separates, a young workman, dressed as Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, or as a beautiful matron representing Typographia, comes forward, holding a book, or the model of a printing press, and thanks them for their presence in an

EPILOGUE.

Our guests and masters good, you maidens and you matrons,
Who of this play of ours are pleas'd to be the patrons,
Receive our hearty thanks for your attractive presence;
Your favor is of our content the sweetest essence.
True 'tis we have not shown to you the real old play,
Such as in olden times our workmen did portray
In this our ancient town; such was not our intent,
But just to keep alive old customs we are bent:
We've only tried to prove how much our art we love,
As our forefathers did—to do the like we strove.

The noble printing art that came from Heaven down
Has merited full well all credit and renown.
The world now follows fast the teaching of our art,
And gets from her all joys for body, soul and heart.
Nor say we this alone—our Emperor renown'd
For his magnificence, and with bright laurels crown'd,
Loves this our art right well, and deems its glory true,
As though to his right hand had fall'n a kingdom new.
Our sages and divines, who at all errors strike,
Show to our art their love and gratitude alike.

But pause! why speak alone of men—they are but mortal,
When God Almighty has our art used as a portal;
From whence His holy word may issue and may spread,
A solace for all souls, and of each life the bread.
The Bible now makes bloom the arid wilderness,
Then let all men unite to bless the printing press.

Creator ever good! Great Father of all grace,
We pray to Thee to spread our art to every race.
Our master printers good, and their relations all,
We recommend to Thee—be with them, great and small;
And let Thy holy word be printed by their hands,
And for the common good be spread throughout all lands.
Protect our noble art from all adversity,
And we will praise Thy name to all eternity.

And now you maidens fair, matrons and masters all,
Who kindly have to-day responded to our call,
We thank you from our hearts; your presence at our labor
Shows plainly to us all that we enjoy your favor.
And if our play to-night has not been good to see—
Nothing is perfect quite—next time 'twill better be.
At present fare you well, good wishes with us send,
To please you all has been our only aim and end.
All times and everywhere we are at your command,
So long as worthy books find readers in our land.

Although known as a Morality play, it will be seen that there is little of the religious element in the *Print-*

er's Apprentice. Rather is it in the nature of a farce, presenting in outline the rude ceremonies performed at the admission of the apprentice to the rank of journeyman. Such ceremonies were always performed on these occasions, and were followed by feasting and drinking, greatly depleting the pocket of the apprentice, or that of his father or guardian; for money was freely lavished, since on the splendor of the entertainment and the abundance and quality of the ensuing banquet depended the standing of the new journeyman.

EVERY-MAN.

A MORALITY.

By Thomas Hawkins, M.A.

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A MORALITY.

By Thomas Hawkins, M.A.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MESSENGER.
GOD.
DEATH.
EVERY-MAN.
FELLOWSHIP.
KINDRED.
GOODS.
GOOD DEEDS.
KNOWLEDGE
CONFESSION.
BEAUTY.
STRENGTH.
DISCRETION
FIVE WITS.
ANGEL.
DOCTOR.

Every-Man.

God speaketh.

God.—I perceive here in my majesty,
How that all creatures be to me unkind,
Living without dread in worldly prosperity:
Of ghostly sight the people be so blind,
Drowned in sin, they know me not for their God;
In worldly riches is all their mind,
They fear not my righteousness, the sharp rod;
My love that I showed when I for them died
They forget clean, and shedding of my blood red;
I hanged between two it cannot be denied;
To give them life I suffered to be dead;
I healed their feet, with thorns hurt was my head;
I could do no more than I did truly,
And now I see the people do clean forsake me:
They use the seven deadly sins damnable,
As pride, covetousness, wrath and lechery,
Now in the world be made commendable:
And thus they leave of angels the heavenly company.
Every man liveth so after his own pleasure,
And yet of their life they be nothing sure:
I see the more that I them forbear
The worse they be from year to year;
All that liveth appeareth faste,
Therefore I will in all the haste
Have a reckoning of every man's person;
For, and I leave the people thus alone
In their life and wicked tempests,
Verily they will become much worse than beasts:

For now one would by envy another up eat;
Charity they do all clean forget:
I hoped well that every man
In my glory should make his mansion,
And thereto I had them all elect;
But now I see, like traitors deject,
They thank me not for the pleasure that I to them meant,
Nor yet for their being that I them have lent:
I proffered the people great multitude of mercy,
And few there be that asketh it heartily;
They be so encumbered with worldly riches,
That needs on them I must do justice,
On every man living without fear.—
Where art thou, Death, thou mighty messenger?

Death.—Almighty God, I am here at your will,
Your commandment to fulfill.

God.—Go thou to Every-man,
And show him in my name,
A pilgrimage he must on him take,
Which he in nowise may escape;
And that he bring with him a sure reckoning,
Without delay or any tarrying.

Dea.—Lord, I will in the world go run over all,
And cruelly out search both great and small;
Every man will I beset that liveth beastly,
Out of God's laws, and dreadeth not folly:
He that loveth riches I will strike with my dart
His sight to blind, and from heaven to depart,
Except that alms be his good friend,
In hell for to dwell world without end.
Lo, yonder I see Every-man walking:
Full little he thinketh on my coming;
His mind is on fleshly lusts, and his treasure;
And great pain it shall cause him to endure
Before the Lord heaven king.—
Every-man, stand still: whither art thou going
Thus gayly? hast thou thy maker forgot?

Every-man.—Why asketh thou?
Wouldst thou wait?

Dea.—Ye, sir, I will show you;
In great haste I am sent to thee
From God out of his majesty.

Ever.—What, sent to me!

Dea.—Ye, certainly:
Though thou have forgot him here,
He thinketh on thee in the heavenly sphere;
As, ere we depart, thou shalt know.

Ever.—What desireth God of me?

Dea.—That shall I show thee;
A reckoning he will needs have
Without any longer respite.

Ever.—To give a reckoning longer leisure I crave;
This blind matter troubleth my wit.

Dea.—On thee thou must take a long journey,
Therefore thy book of count with thee thou bring,
For turn again thou cannot by no way:
And look, thou be sure of thy reckoning;
For before God thou shalt answer and show
Thy many bad deeds, and good but a few,
How thou hast spent thy life, and in what wise,
Before the chief lord of paradise
Have I do we were in that way,
For, wait thou well, thou shalt make no attorney.

Ever.—Full unready I am such reckoning to give:
I know thee not; what messenger art thou?

Dea.—I am Death, that no man dreadeth;
For every man I rest, and no man spareth,
For it is God's commandment
That all to me should be obedient.

Ever.—O Death, thou comest when I had thee least in mind:
In thy power it lieth me to save;
Yet of my good will I give thee, if thou will be kind,
Yea, a thousand pounds shalt thou have.
And defer this matter till another day.

Dea.—Every-man, it may not be by no way;
I set not by gold, silver nor riches,
Nor by pope, emperor, king, duke nor princes;

For, and I would receive gifts great,
All the world I might get;
But my custom is clean contrary:
I give thee no respite, come hence, and not tarry.

Ever.—Alas, shall I have no longer respite?
I may say, Death giveth no warning:
To think on thee it maketh my heart sick;
For all unready is my book of reckoning:
But twelve years and I might have abiding,
My accounting book I would make so clear
That my reckoning I should not need to fear.
Wherefore, Death, I pray thee for God's mercy,
Spare me till I be provided of remedy.

Dea.—Thee availeth not to cry, weep and pray:
But hast thee lightly that thou were going this journey:
And prove thy friends if thou can;
For, wait thou well, the tide abideth no man,
And in the world each living creature
For Adam's sin must die of nature.

Ever.—Death, if I should this pilgrimage take,
And my reckoning surely make,
Show me, for Saint Charity,
Should I not come again shortly?

Dea.—No, Every-man, and thou be once there,
Thou mayst never more come here,
Trust me verily.

Ever.—O gracious God, in the high seat celestial,
Have mercy on me in this most need.—
Shall I have no company from this vale terrestrial
Of mine acquaintance that way me to lead?

Dea.—Yea, if any be so hardy,
That would go with thee, and bear thee company:
Hie thee that thou were gone to God's magnificence,
Thy reckoning to give before his presence.
What, wantest thou thy life is given thee,
And thy worldly goods also?

Ever.—I had wanted so, verily.

Dea.—Nay, nay; it was but lent thee,
For as soon as thou art gone,

Another awhile shall have it, and then go therefrom,
Even as thou hast done.
Every-man, thou art made, thou hast thy wits five;
And here on earth will not amend thy life;
For suddenly I do come.

Ever.—O wretched caitiff, whither shall I flee,
That I might escape this endless sorrow!—
Now, gentle Death, spare me till to-morrow,
That I may amend me
With good advisement.

Dea.—Nay, thereto I will not consent,
Nor no man will I respite;
But to the heart suddenly I shall smite
Without any advisement.
And now out of thy sight I will me hie;
See thou make thee ready shortly,
For thou mayst say, this is the day
That no man living may escape away.

Ever.—Alas! I may well weep with sighs deep:
Nor have I no manner of company
To help me in my journey, and me to keep;
And also my writing is full unready.
How shall I do now for to excuse me!
I would to God I had never beget;
To my soul a full great profit it had be;
For now I fear pains huge and great.
The time passeth:—Lord, help that all wrought;
For though I mourn it availeth naught:
The day passeth, and is almost agone;
I wot not well what for to do.
To whom were I best my complaint to make?
What, and I to Fellowship thereof spake,
And showed him of this sudden chance!
For in him is all mine affiance;
We have in the world so many a day
Been good friends in sport and play.
I see him yonder, certainly;
I trust that he will bear me company,
Therefore to him will I speak to ease my sorrow.
Well met, good Fellowship; and good-morrow.

Fellowship speaketh.

Fellowship.—Every-man, good-morrow by this day:
Sir, why lookest thou so piteously?
If anything be amiss, I pray thee, me say,
That I may help to remedy.

Every-man.—Yea, good Fellowship, yea;
I am in great jeopardy.

Fel.—My true friend, show to me your mind;
I will not forsake thee to my life's end,
In the way of good company.

Ever.—That was well spoken, and lovingly.

Fel.—Sir, I must needs know your heaviness;
I have pity to see you in any distress:
If any have you wronged ye shall revenged be,
Though I on the ground be slain for thee,
Though that I know before that I should die.

Ever.—Verily, Fellowship, gramercy.

Fel.—Tusshe! by thy thanks I set not a straw;
Show me your grief, and say no more.

Ever.—If I my heart should to you break,
And then you to turn your mind from me,
And would not me comfort when ye hear me speak,
Then should I ten times sorrier be.

Fel.—Sir, I say as I will do, indeed.

Ever.—Then be you a good friend at need;
I have found you true here before.

Fel.—And so ye shall evermore;
For, in faith, and thou go to hell,
I will not forsake thee by the way.

Ever.—Ye speak like a good friend, I believe you well;
I shall deserve it and I may.

Fel.—I speak of no deserving, by this day;
For he that will say and nothing do,
Is not worthy with good company to go:
Therefore show me the grief of your mind,
As to your friend most lovingly and kind.

Ever.—I shall show you how it is
Commanded, I am to go a journey,
A long way, hard and dangerous;
And give a straight account without delay
Before the high judge Adonai:
Wherefore I pray you, bear me company,
As ye have promised, in this journey.

Fel.—That is matter, indeed; promise is duty,
But and I should take such a voyage on me,
I know it well it should be to my pain:
Also it makes me afraid certain.
But let us take counsel here as well as we can,
For your words would fear a strong man.

Ever.—Why, ye said—if I had need,
Ye would me never forsake quick indeed,
Though it were to hell truly.

Fel.—So I said, certainly;
But such pleasures be set aside, the sooth to say,
And also if we took such a journey,
When should we come again?

Ever.—Nay, never again till the day of doom.

Fel.—In faith, then will not I come there:
Who hath you these tidings brought?

Ever.—Indeed, Death was with me here.

Fel.—Now, by God that all hath bought,
If Death were the messenger,
For no man that is living to-day
I will not go that loath journey,
Not for the father that begat me.

Ever.—Ye promised otherwise, pard.

Fel.—I know well I say so truly,
And yet if thou wilt eat and drink, and make good cheer,
Or haunt to women the lusty company,
I would not forsake you while the day is clear,
Trust me verily.

Ever.—Yea, thereto ye would be ready:
To go to mirth, solace and play.
Your mind will sooner apply
Than to bear me company in my long journey.

Fel.—Now, in good faith, I will not that way;
But and thou will murder, or any man kill,
In that I will help thee with a good-will.

Ever.—O, that is a simple advice indeed:
Gentle Fellowship, help me in my necessity;
We have loved long, and now I need,
And now, gentle Fellowship, remember me.

Fel.—Whether ye have loved me or no,
By Saint John, I will not with thee go.

Ever.—Yet I pray thee, take the labor, and do so much for me,
To bring me forward, for Saint Charity,
And comfort me till I come without the town.

Fel.—Nay, and thou would give me a new gown,
I will not a foot with thee go;
But and thou had tarried, I would not have left thee so:
And as now, God speed thee in thy journey!
For from thee I will depart as fast as I may.

Ever.—Whither away, Fellowship? will you forsake me?

Fel.—Ye, by my say; to God I betake thee.

Ever.—Farewell, good Fellowship: for this my heart is sore:
Adieu forever, I shall see thee no more.

Fel.—In faith, Every-man, farewell now at the end;
For you I will remember that parting is mourning.

Ever.—Alack! shall we thus depart, indeed?
Aye! Lady, help, without any more comfort,
Lo, Fellowship forsaketh me in my most need:
For help in this world whither shall I resort?
Fellowship here before with me would merry make;
And now little sorrow for me doth he take.
It is said, in prosperity men friends may find,
Which in adversity be full unkind.
Now, whither for succor shall I flee,
Since that Fellowship hath forsaken me?
To my kinsmen I will truly,
Praying them to help me in my necessity;
I believe that they will do so;
For kind will creep where it may not go.
I will go say; for yonder I see them go:—
Where be ye now, my friends and kinsmen?

Kindred.—Here be we now at your commandment:
Confession, I pray you, show us your intent
In any wise, and not spare.

Confession.—Yea, Every-man, and to us declare
If ye be disposed to go anywhere;
For, wait you well, will live and die together.

Kin.—In wealth and woe we will with you hold;
For over his kin a man may be bold.

Ever.—Gramercy, my friends and kinsmen kind;
Now shall I show you the grief of my mind.
I was commanded by a messenger,
That is a high king's chief officer;
He bade me go a pilgrimage to my pain,
And, I know well, I shall never come again:
Also I must give a reckoning straight;
For I have a great enemy that hath me in wait,
Which intendeth me for to hinder.

Kin.—What account is that which ye must render?
That would I know.

Ever.—Of all my works I must show,
How I have lived, and my days spent;
Also of ill deeds that I have used
In my time this life was me lent,
And of all virtues that I have refused:
Therefore I pray you, go thither with me
To help to make my account, for Saint Charity.

Con.—What, to go thither? Is that the matter?
Nay, Every-man, I had rather fast on bread and water,
All this five year and more.

Ever.—Alas, that ever I was born!
For now shall I never be merry,
If that you forsake me.

Kin.—Aye, sir; what, ye be a merry man:
Take good heart to you, and make no moan.
But one thing I warn you, by Saint Ann,
As for me ye shall go alone.

Ever.—My Confession, will you not with me go?

Con.—No, by our Lady, I have the cramp in my toe:

Trust not to me; for, so God me speed,
I will deceive you in your most need.

Kin.—It availeth not us to ties:
Ye shall have my maid, with all my heart;
She loveth to go to feasts, there to be nice,
And to dance, and abroad to start:
I will give her leave to help you in that journey,
If that you and she may agree.

Ever.—Now show me the very effect of your mind;
Will you go with me, or abide behind?

Kin.—Abide behind! yea, that will I and I may;
Therefore farewell till another day.

Ever.—How should I be merry or glad?
For fair promises men to me make;
But, when I have most need, they me forsake;
I am deceived, that maketh me sad.

Con.—Confession Every-man, farewell now;
For, verily, I will not go with you:
Also of mine own an unready reckoning
I have to account, therefore I make tarrying;
Now God keep thee, for now I go.

Ever.—Aye, Jesus, is all come here to?
Lo, fair words maketh fools vain;
They promise, and nothing will do certain.
My kinsmen promised me faithfully
For to abide with me steadfastly;
And now fast away do they flee:
Even so Fellowship promised me.
What friend were best me of to provide?
I lose my time here longer to abide;
Yet in my mind a thing there is,—
All my life I have loved riches;
If that my good now help me might,
He would make my heart full light:
I will speak to him in this distress.—
Where art thou, my Goods, and riches?

Goods.—Who calleth me? Every-man? what haste thou hast?
I lie here in corners trussed and piled so high,
And in chests I am locked so fast,

Also sacked in bags, thou mayst see with thine eye,
I cannot stir; in packs low I lie:
What would ye have, lightly me say?

Ever.—Come hither, Good, in all the haste thou may;
For of counsel I must desire thee.

Goods.—Sir, and ye in the world have sorrow or adversity,
That can I help you to remedy shortly.

Ever.—It is another disease that grieveth me;
In this world it is not, I tell thee so,
I am sent for another way to go,
To give a straight account general
Before the highest Jupiter of all:
And all my life I have had joy and pleasure in thee,
Therefore I pray thee go with me;
For, peradventure, thou mayst before God Almighty
My reckoning help to clean and purify,
For it is said ever among
That money maketh all right that is wrong.

Goods.—Nay, Every-man, I sing another song;
I follow no man on such voyages,
For, and I went with thee,
Thou should fare much the worse for me:
For because on me thou did set thy mind,
Thy reckoning I have made blotted and blind,
That thine account thou cannot make truly;
And that hast thou for the love of me.

Ever.—That would grieve me full sore,
When I should come to that fearful answer:
Up, let us go thither together.

Goods.—Nay, not so; I am too brittle, I may not endure:
I will follow no man one foot be ye sure.

Ever.—Alas, I have thee loved, and had great pleasure
All my life days on good and treasure.

Goods.—That is to thy damnation without lessening,
For my love is contrary to the love everlasting;
But if thou had me loved moderately during,
As, to the poor give part of me,
Then shouldst thou not in this dolor be,
Nor in this great sorrow and care.

Ever.—Lo, now was I deceived or I was aware,
And all I may wait my spending of time.

Goods.—What, wantest thou that I am thine?

Ever.—I had wanted so.

Goods.—Nay, Every-man, I say no:
As for a while I was lent thee;
A season thou hast had me in prosperity;
My condition is man's soul to kill,
If I save one, a thousand I do spill:
Wantest thou that I will follow thee?
Nay, from this world not verily.

Ever.—I had wanted otherwise.

Goods.—Therefore to thy soul Good is a thief,
For when thou art dead, this is my guise,
Another to deceive in this same wise,
As I have done thee, and all to his soul's reprieve.

Ever.—O false Good, cursed thou be,
Thou traitor to God that hast deceived me,
And caught me in thy snare.

Goods.—Mary, thou brought thyself in care,
Whereof I am glad,
I must needs laugh, I cannot be sad.

Ever.—Aye, Good, thou hast had long my heartily love;
I gave thee that which should be the Lord's above:
But wilt thou not go with me, indeed?
I pray the truth to say.

Goods.—No, so God me speed;
Therefore farewell, and have good-day.

Ever.—O, to whom shall I make my moan!
For, to go with me on that heavy journey,
First, Fellowship said he would with me gone;
His words were very pleasant and gay,
But afterward he left me alone.
Then spake I to my kinsmen all in despair,
And also they gave me words fair,
They lacked no fair speaking;
But all forsake me in the ending.
Then went I to my Goods that I loved best,

In hope to have comfort; but there had I least:
For my Goods sharply did me tell,
That he bringeth many into hell.
Then of myself I was ashamed,
And so I am worthy to be blamed:
Thus may I well myself hate.
Of whom shall I now counsel take?
I think that I shall never speed
Till that I go to my Good-deed;
But, alas! she is so weak
That she can neither go nor speak:
Yet will I venture on her now.—
My Good-deeds, where be you?

Good-deeds.—Here I lie, cold in the ground;
Thy sins hath me so bound,
That I cannot stir.

Ever.—O Good-deeds, I stand in fear;
I must you pray of counsel,
For help now should come right well.

Good-deeds.—Every-man, I have understanding,
That ye be summoned a count to make
Before Myssias of Jerusalem king,
And you do by me that journey what you will I take.

Ever.—Therefore I come to you my moan to make:
I pray you, that ye will go with me.

Good-deeds.—I would full fain, but I can not stand verily.

Ever.—Why, is there anything on your fall?

Good-deeds.—Yes, sir, I may thank you of all;
If ye had perfectly cheered me,
Your book of count full ready had be.
Look, the books of your works and deeds eke;
Aye, see how they lie under the feet,
To your soul's heaviness.

Ever.—Cur Lord Jesus help me,
For one letter here I cannot see.

Good-deeds.—There is a blind reckoning in time of distress.

Ever.—Good-deeds, I pray you, help me in this need,
Or else I am forever damned, indeed;

Therefore help me to make reckoning
Before the Redeemer of all thing,
That king is, and was, and ever shall.

Good-deeds.—Every-man, I am sorry for your fall,
And fain would I help you and I were able.

Ever.—Good-deeds, your counsel I pray you give me.

Good-deeds.—That shall I do verily:
Though that on my feet I may not go,
I have a sister that shall with you also,
Called Knowledge, which shall with you abide,
To help you make that dreadful reckoning.

Knowledge.—Every-man, I will go with thee, and be thy guide,
In thy most need to go by thy side.

Ever.—In good condition I am now in everything,
And am whole content with this good thing,
Thanked by God my creature.

Good-deeds.—And when he hath brought you there,
Where thou shalt heal thee of thy smart,
Then go you with your reckoning and your good deeds together,
For to make you joyful at heart
Before the blessed Trinity.

Ever.—My Good-deeds, gramercy;
I am well content certainly
With your words sweet.

Kno.—Now go we together lovingly
To Confession, that cleansing river.

Ever.—For joy I weep: I would we were there;
But, I pray you, give me cognition,
Where dwelleth that holy man Confession?

Kno.—In the house of salvation;
We shall find him in that place,
That shall us comfort by God's grace.—
Lo, this is Confession: kneel down, and ask mercy;
For he is in good conceit with God Almighty.

Ever.—O glorious fountain that all uncleanliness doth clarify,
Wash from me the spots of vice unclean,
That on me no sin may be seen;

I come with Knowledge for my redemption,
Redempt with heart and full contrition,
For I am commanded a pilgrimage to take,
And great accounts before God to make.
Now I pray you, Shrift, mother of salvation,
Help my good deeds for my piteous exclamation.

Con.—I know your sorrows well, Every-man:
Because with Knowledge ye come to me,
I will you comfort as well as I can;
And a precious jewel I will give thee,
Called penance, voice voider of adversity:
Therewith shall your body chastised be
With abstinence and perseverance in God's service;
Here shall you receive that scourge of me,
Which is penance strong that ye must endure,
To remember thy Saviour was scourged for thee
With sharp scourges, and suffered it patiently:
So must thou, or thou escape that painful pilgrimage.—
Knowledge, keep him in this voyage,
And by that time Good-deeds will be with thee;
But in any wise be seeker of mercy,
For your time draweth fast; and ye will saved be,
Ask God mercy, and he will grant truly:
When with the scourge of penance man doth him bind,
The oil of forgiveness then shall he find.

Ever.—Thanked be God for his gracious work;
For now I will my penance begin:
This hath rejoiced and lighted my heart,
Though the knots be painful and hard within.

Kno.—Every-man, look your penance that ye fulfill,
What pain that ever it to you be;
And Knowledge shall give you counsel at will,
How your account ye shall make clearly.

Ever.—O eternal God, O heavenly figure,
O way of righteousness, O goodly vision,
Which descended down in a virgin pure
Because he would Every-man redeem,
Which Adam forfeited by his disobedience,
O blessed Godhead elect and high divine,

Forgive my grievous offence;
Here I cry thee mercy in this presence:
O ghostly treasure, O ransomer and redeemer
Of all the world, hope and conduiter,
Mirror of joy, foundator of mercy,
Which illumineth heaven and earth thereby,
Hear my clamorous complaint, though it late be,
Receive my prayers; unworthy in this heavy life
Though I be, a sinner most abominable,
Yet let my name be written in Moses' table.—
O Mary, pray to the maker of all things
Me for to help at my ending,
And save me from the power of my enemy;
For Death assaileth me strongly:
And, Lady, that I may by means of thy prayer
Of your son's glory be a partner,
By the means of his passion, I it crave;
I beseech you, help my soul to save.—
Knowledge, give me the scourge of penance,
My flesh therewith shall give acquaintance;
I will now begin, if God give me grace.

Kno.—Every-man, God give you time and space:
Thus I bequeath you in the hands of our Saviour;
Now may you make your reckoning sure.

Ever.—In the name of the holy Trinity,
My body sore punished shall be,
Take this body for the sin of the flesh;
Also thou delightest to go gay and fresh;
And in the way of damnation thou did me bring,
Therefore suffer now strokes of punishing:
Now of penance I will wade the water clear,
To save me from purgatory that sharp fire.

Good-deeds.—I thank God, now I can walk and go,
And am delivered of my sickness and woe;
Therefore with Every-man I will go, and not spare,
His good works I will help him to declare.

Kno.—Now, Every-man, be merry and glad;
Your Good-deeds cometh now, ye may not be sad:
Now is your Good-deeds whole and sound,
Going upright upon the ground.

Ever.—My heart is light, and shall be evermore;
Now will I smite faster than I did before.

Good-deeds.—Every-man, pilgrim, my special friend,
Blessed be thou without end;
For thee is prepared the eternal glory:
Ye have me made whole and sound,
Therefore I will abide by thee in every stound.

Ever.—Welcome, my Good-deeds, now I hear thy voice
I weep for very sweetness of love.

Kno.—Be no more sad, but ever rejoice,
God seeth thy living in his throne above;
Put on his garment to thy behove,
Which is wet with your tears,
Or else before God you may it miss,
When ye to your journey's end come shall.

Ever.—Gentle Knowledge, what do ye it call?

Kno.—It is a garment of sorrow,
From pain it will you borrow;
Contrition it is,
That getteth forgiveness,
He pleaseth God passing well.

Good-deeds.—Every-man, will you wear it for your heal?

Ever.—Now blessed be Jesus, Mary's son;
For now have I on true contrition:
And let us go now without tarrying.—
Good-deeds, have we clear our reckoning?

Good-deeds.—Yea, indeed, I have it here.

Ever.—Then I trust we need not fear:—
Now, friends, let us not part entwain.

Kin.—Nay, Every-man, that will we not certain.

Good-deeds.—Yet must thou lead with thee
Three persons of great might.

Ever.—Who should they be?

Good-deeds.—Discretion and Strength they height,
And thy Beauty may not abide behind.

Kno.—Also, ye must call to mind
Your Five-wits as for your counselors.

Good-deeds.—You must have them ready at all hours.

Ever.—How shall I get them hither?

Kin.—You must call them all together,
And they will hear you in continent.

Ever.—My friends, come hither, and be present,
Discretion, Strength, my Five-wits and Beauty.

Beauty.—Here at your will we be all ready;
What will ye that we should do?

Good-deeds.—That ye would with Every-man go,
And help him in his pilgrimage:
Advise you, will ye with him or not in that voyage?

Strength.—We will bring him all thither
To his help and comfort, ye may believe me.

Discretion.—So will we go with him all together.

Ever.—Almighty God, loved might thou be;
I give thee laud that I have hither brought
Strength, Discretion, Beauty, Five-wits, lack I naught:
And my Good-deeds, with Knowledge clear,
All be in my company at my will here;
I desire no more to my business.

Str.—And I Strength will by you stand in distress,
Though thou would in battle fight on the ground.

Five-wits.—And though it were through the world round,
We will not depart for sweet nor sour.

Bea.—No more will I unto death's hour,
Whatsoever thereof befall.

Disc.—Every-man, advise you first of all,
Go with a good advisement and deliberation:
We all give you virtuous monition,
That all shall be well.

Ever.—My friends, harken what I will tell;
I pray God reward you in his heaven sphere;
Now hearken all that be here;
For I will make my testament
Here before you all present:
In alms, half my goods I will give with my hands twain,
In the way of charity, with good intent,

And the other half still shall remain,
In queth to be returned there it ought to be.
This I do in despite of the fiend of hell,
To go quite out of his parallel
Ever after and this day.

Kno.—Every-man, hearken what I say;
Go to priesthood I you advise,
And receive of him in any wise
The holy sacrament and ointment together,
Then shortly see, ye return again hither,
We will all abide you here.

Five-wits.—Yea, Every-man, hie you that ye ready were:
There is no emperor, king, duke nor baron,
That of God hath commission,
As hath the least priest in the world benign;
For of the blessed sacraments pure and benign
He beareth the keys, and thereof hath the cure
For man's redemption, it is ever sure,
Which God for our soul's medicine
Gave us out of his heart with great pain,
Here in this transitory life for thee and me:
The blessed sacraments, seven there be,
Baptism, confirmation, with priesthood good,
And the sacrament of God's precious flesh and blood,
Marriage, the holy extreme unction, and penance;
These seven be good to have in remembrance,
Gracious sacraments of high divinity.

Ever.—Fain would I receive that holy body;
And meekly to my ghostly father I will go.

Five-wits.—Every-man, that is the best that ye can do;
God will you to salvation bring,
For priesthood exceedeth all other things;
To us holy scripture they do teach,
And converteth man from sin heaven to reach;
God hath to them more power given
Than to any angel that is in heaven:
With five words he may consecrate
God's body in flesh and blood to make,
And handleth his maker between his hands,
The priest bindeth and unbindeth all bands

Both in earth and in heaven,—
Thou ministers all the sacraments seven,
Though we kiss thy feet thou were worthy,
Thou art surgeon that cureth sin deadly,
No remedy we find under God,
But all only priesthood.
Every-man, God gave priest that dignity,
And setteth them in his stead among us to be;
Thus be they above angels in degree.

Kno.—If priests be good it is so surely,
But when Jesus hanged on the cross with great smart,
There he gave out of his blessed heart
The same sacrament in great torment,
He sold them not to us that Lord omnipotent,
Therefore Saint Peter, the apostle doth say,
That Jesus' curse hath all they
Which God their favor do buy or sell,
Or they for any money do take or tell,
Sinful priests giveth the sinners example bad,
Their children sitteth by other men's fires I have heard,
And some haunteth women's company,
With unclean life as lusts of lechery;
These be with sin made blind.

Five-wits.—I trust to God, no such may we find:
Therefore let us priesthood honor,
And follow their doctrine for our soul's succor;
We be their sheep, and they shepherds be,
By whom we all be kept in surety.—
Peace! for yonder I see Every-man come,
Which hath made true satisfaction.

Good-deeds.—Methink, it is he, indeed.

Ever.—Now Jesus be your alder speed!
I have received the sacrament for my redemption,
And then mine extreme unction;
Blessed be all they that counseled me to take it:
And now, friends, let us go without longer respite;
I thank God that ye have tarried so long.
Now set each of you on this rod your hand;
And shortly follow me;
I go before there I would be: God be your guide.

Str.—Every-man, we will not from you go,
Till ye have done this voyage long.

Disc.—I, Discretion, will abide by you also.

Kno.—And though this pilgrimage be never so strong,
I will never part you from:
Every-man, I will be as sure by thee
As ever I did by Judas Machabee.

Ever.—Alas! I am so faint I may not stand.
My limbs under me doth fold:
Friends, let us not return again to this land,
Not for all the world's gold;
For into this cave must I creep,
And return to earth and there to sleep.

Bea.—What, into this grave? Alas!

Ever.—Yea, there shall ye consume more and less.

Bea.—And what, should I smother here?

Ever.—Yea, by my faith, and never more appear;
In this world live no more we shall,
But in heaven before the highest Lord of all.

Bea.—I cross out all this: adieu, by Saint John;
I take my tap in my lap, and am gone.

Ever.—What, Beauty? whither will ye?

Bea.—Peace! I am deaf, I look not behind me,
Not and thou wouldst give me all the gold in thy chest.

Ever.—Alas! whereto may I trust?
Beauty goeth fast away from me,
She promised with me to live and die.

Str.—Every-man, I will thee also forsake and deny,
Thy game liketh me not at all.

Ever.—Why, then, ye will forsake me all:
Sweet Strength, tarry a little space.

Str.—Nay, sir, by the rod of grace,
I will hie me from thee fast,
Though thou weep to thy heart to brast.

Ever.—Ye would ever bide by me, ye said.

Str.—Yea, I have you far enough conveyed:
Ye be old enough, I understand,

Your pilgrimage to take on hand;
I repent me, that I hither came.

Ever.—Strength, you to displease I am to blame;
Will ye break promise that is debt?

Str.—In faith, I care not:
Thou art but a fool to complain;
You spend your speech, and waste your brain:
Go, thrust thee into the ground.

Ever.—I had wanted surer I should you have found:
He that trusteth in his Strength,
She him deceiveth at the length,
Both Strength and Beauty forsake me,
Yet they promised me fair and lovingly.

Disc.—Every-man, I will after Strength be gone;
As for me, I will leave you alone.

Ever.—Why, Discretion, will ye forsake me?

Disc.—Yea, in faith, I will go from thee;
For when Strength goeth before,
I follow after evermore.

Ever.—Yet I pray thee, for the love of the Trinity,
Look into my grave once piteously.

Disc.—Nay, so nigh will I not come.
Farewell every one.

Ever.—O, all things faileth, save God alone,
Beauty, Strength and Discretion;
For, when Death bloweth his blast,
They all run from me full fast.

Five-wits.—Every-man, my leave now of thee I take;
I will follow the other, for here I thee forsake.

Ever.—Alas! then may I wail and weep;
For I took you for my best friend.

Five-wits.—I will no longer thee keep:
Now farewell, and there an end.

Ever.—O Jesus, help! all hath forsaken me.

Good-deeds.—Nay, Every-man, I will bide with thee,
I will not forsake thee, indeed;
Thou shalt find me a good friend at need.

Ever.—Gramercy, Good-deeds, now may I true friends see;

They have forsaken me every one,
Knowledge, will ye forsake me also?

Kno.—Ye, Every-man, when ye to death shall go;
But not yet for no manner of danger.

Ever.—Gramercy, Knowledge, with all my heart.

Kno.—Nay, yet I will not from hence depart,
Till I see where ye shall be come.

Ever.—Methink, alas! that I must be gone
To make my reckoning, and my debts pay;
For, I see, my time is nigh spent away.—
Take example, all ye that this do hear or see,
How they that I love best do forsake me;
Except my Good-deeds, that abideth truly.

Good-deeds.—All earthly things is but vanity,
Beauty, Strength and Discretion do man forsake,
Foolish friends, and kinsmen, that fair spake;
All fleeth save Good-deeds, and that am I.

Ever.—Have mercy on me, God most mighty,—
And stand by me thou mother and maid, holy Mary.

Good-deeds.—Fear not, I will speak for thee.

Ever.—Hear I cry God mercy.

Good-deeds.—Shorten our end and diminish our pain:
Let us go, and never come again.

Ever.—Into thy hands, Lord, my soul I commend,
Receive it, Lord, that it be not lost;
As thou me boughtest, so me defend,
And save me from the fiend's boast,
That I may appear with that blessed host
That shall be saved at the day of doom:
(In manus tuas)—of might's most
Forever—(commendo spiritum meum.)

Kno.—Now hath he suffered that we all shall endure,
The Good-deeds shall make all sure;
Now hath he made ending:
Me thinketh that I hear angels sing,
And make great joy and melody,
Where every man's soul received shall be.

The Angel.—Come, excellent elect spouse to Jesus,
Here above thou shalt go,
Because of thy singular virtue:
Now the soul is taken the body from,
Thy reckoning is crystal clear;
Now shalt thou into the heavenly sphere,
Unto which all ye shall come
That liveth well before the day of doom.

Doctor.—This moral men may have in mind;
Ye hearers, take it of worth, old and young,
And forsake pride, for he deceiveth you in the end,
And remember Beauty, Five-wits, Strength and Discretion,
They all at the last do Every-man forsake,
Save his Good-deeds, there doth he take:
But beware, and they be small,
Before God he hath no help at all;
None excuse may be there for Every-man:
Alas! how shall he do then,
For after death amends may no man make;
For then mercy and pity doth him forsake;
If his reckoning be not clean when he doth come,
God will say—Ite, maledicti, in ignem æternum:
And he that hath his account whole and sound,
High in heaven he shall be crowned;
Unto which place God bring us all thither,
That we may live body and soul together;
Thereto help the Trinity:
Amen, say ye, for Saint Charity.